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J.W. Fawkes

THE CHICKASAW NATION

A SHORT SKETCH OF A NOBLE PEOPLE

Souvenir of Memphis Centenary Celebration
May 19-24, 1919

By
JAMES H. MALONE

23401

N.A. Eth. M 297c
Gift of J. W. Fewkes
Rec. Jan. 22, 1931.

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By JAMES H. MALONE

To My Dear Wife

ESTELLE VERNEY MALONE

To whom I owe so much,
These pages are inscribed

FOREWORD.

During a somewhat protracted experience at the Memphis bar, my attention was early called to the treaties of 1832 and 1834 between the United States and the Chickasaw Nation.

Under these treaties the Chickasaws ceded the last inch of that vast and splendid domain which they had conquered and occupied long before Columbus, sailing westward, looked upon the shores of what was called a new world.

There are lines of deep pathos in those treaties. From time to time my attention was called to the early history of the Chickasaws, and I made some notes, and still later wrote some fragmentary sketches upon the subject, more as a diversion than otherwise. In assisting with our approaching Centenary Celebration (May 19-24, 1919), I concluded, almost at the last moment, to print what I have already written as a souvenir, and as a small contribution to local history.

Should time and opportunity permit, I hope to complete what I design to call—"The Chickasaw Nation; A Short Sketch of a Noble People."

JAMES H. MALONE.

May, 1919.

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CHAPTER I.

AS TO THE ORIGIN OF THE AMERICAN INDIANS.

When Christopher Columbus sailed from Spain in August, 1492, going westward over an unexplored sea, the expectation of discovering a new world was far from his thoughts.

It had for years been the dream of his life that there must be land beyond the limits of the Atlantic, and that by sailing to the West he could discover a nearer route to India than was at that time in use.

The riches of India were believed to be almost boundless, and Venice and other centers of commerce had amassed wealth in trade therewith; all of which fired the imagination of Columbus who was naturally of an adventurous disposition, and withal a man of great daring and ability.

After some months of sailing it took all the ingenuity and address of the great sailor to prevent an open mutiny of his crew, consisting of 120 men, who became discouraged, many of them fearing that they would be cast away upon what seemed to them a limitless waste of desolate waters.

Finally when the crew was almost in a state of mutiny, one night Columbus descried a light and soon land loomed up in the distance, and then the vessels lay to, until next day, when they were overjoyed to behold a beautiful forested land from which friendly savages, perfectly naked, issued forth looking upon the white men and their vessels with evident astonishment.

Attired in scarlet Columbus with his principal officers and men bearing the standards of Ferdinand and Isabella, were soon on the land, when the admiral fell on his knees, kissed the earth and returned thanks for his safe deliverance with tears of joy; and his example being followed by his men, he arose and with sword in hand declared that he took possession of the country in the name of his King and Queen.

In so doing he ignored the rights of the aborigines, whose ancestors had possessed the country as their own from time immemorial.

He claimed the country by what is termed the right of discovery, or which might otherwise be termed the right of might.

Long years afterwards in the year 1823, the Supreme Court of the United States through Chief Justice Marshall solemnly adjudged that in point of law the Indians had no real title to the country they occupied, but that European nations secured the title thereto by right of original discovery, which was the subject of barter and sale, regardless of the rights and claims of the aborigines who for ages had occupied, claimed and owned distinct and separate parts of the new world. (See the case of *Johnson* v. *McIntosh,* 8 Wheaton, 543.)

Columbus named the island on which he landed San Salvador, and thinking that it was a part of India he called the inhabitants Indians, and this designation has clung to the aborigines of America to this day, and will doubtless endure for all time.

This is but one instance illustrating that when an error has once fixed itself in the popular mind, that it is next to impossible to correct it. In this instance the error is harmless; but in other departments of the many factors which go towards making up the onward march of civilization, like errors and delusions have greatly delayed progress in many of the activities of human life.

This memorable voyage of Columbus was the signal that soon brought forth many adventurous sailors, who sailed the seas over in the quest of fortune and fame; but years rolled by before it was known that in point of fact a new world had been discovered.

Amerigo Vespucci among others having crossed the ocean to the main land of the Western hemisphere, so impressed his contemporaries with reports of his discoveries, that the new world became his namesake, and ever since has been known as America, an honor undeserved and that should have been bestowed upon Columbus, but instead he was rewarded with poverty and chains.

It was not until years afterwards, that Magellan succeeded in passing around the southern extremity of America, and gave his name to the wild and dangerous straits through which he passed from the Atlantic to the Pacific ocean, and the latter to this day bears the name he gave it.

His dream was to prove that this world in which we live is a globe, but his dream ended with his life April 27, 1521, in the Philippine Islands which he discovered.

Fortunately his lieutenant, Sebastine d'Elcano, proved a worthy successor to the great Magellan, and succeeding to the command, he sailed onward and after discovering many islands, finally doubled the southern extremity of the African continent and returned to the port from which he sailed, thereby proving to be true the theory of Magellan, and which in turn proved that America was a new world beyond the shadow of a doubt.

Magellan had sailed with five ships, but only one, the San Vittoria, circled the earth, arriving at St. Lucar, near Seville, September 7, 1522, after a voyage of more than three years.

She had accomplished the greatest achievement in the history of the world up to that time, for she had circumnavigated the Globe. The tremendous importance of this great voyage, and its effect upon the intellectual development of mankind lies far beyond the scope of these pages.

The wise men, philosophers and especially the ecclesiastical world were thrown into a great discussion to account for a new world, peopled by many tribes and nations theretofore unknown, and likewise forested with innumerable new trees and plants through which roamed countless new animals, while the air was filled with birds and a feathered tribe totally unknown in the old world.

The question debated was as to when and where all of these things were created, and especially were they created as a part of that six days creative acts set forth in the sacred writings of the Christian religion.

To doubt that all men were the descendants of Adam and Eve was to deny the authenticity of the scriptures, and would probably have put in jeopardy the liberty or life of one so bold as to raise such a question.

It is difficult for us now to realize how profoundly the question as to the origin of the American aborigines affected the learned men and ecclesiastics of that time, and even in comparatively modern days.

One of the early and favorite theories was a suggestion or argument put forth that when the ark of Noah finally rested on Mount Ararat that by unknown means some of its passengers became shipwrecked, so to speak, and in due course of time some of them reached the new world, and that the Indians were their descendants. Volumes were written to sustain this view.

Other authors called attention to the fact that in the remote past Diodorus Siculus relates that the ancient Phoenicians discovered a large island in the Atlantic far beyond the pillars of Hercules, which abounded in all kinds of riches. Plutarch mentions what Plato said as to the information given in respect thereto by Egyptian priests. This is what is sometimes called the fabled Atlantis. Many believe even to this day that there was such an island known as the Atlantis, which formerly adjoined other islands so that America might have been peopled from Europe by persons going from one island to another until the American continent was reached. The Azores islands are supposed by some to be the tops of the mountains on the Atlantis island at the time a great submergence took place in some prehistoric period.

I was in the Azores in 1912, and to me the islands had a mountainous aspect.

Another theory and the one probably most written of and advocated by learned writers, is to the effect that the Indians were the descendants of the lost tribes of Israel; that is that they are the lineal descendants of the Jews. Among these writers I read only one, viz: that of James Adair, who published a lengthy account of the American Indians in London in 1775, which has never been republished and is a rare book.

Adair was an English trader and commenced to trade with the Indians in 1735, and first traded with the Chickasaws in 1744, and among whom he wrote the greater part of his book.

The book contains 404 pages, of which 220 pages consists of what he denominates "Arguments" in proof of his theory that the Indians are descendants of the Jews. There are twenty-three of these "Arguments," each being about the usual length of an ordinary chapter. Adair was perfectly conversant with the marriage, divorce, inheritance, burial and all other rites, laws and customs of the Chickasaws, and neighboring nations, as a white man could well be; and at the same time he was perfectly conversant with the Old Testament; and the ingenuity displayed by him in an endeavor to show a similarity between the ancient customs and laws of the Jews with those of the Indians is worthy of admiration.

John R. Swanton, of the Bureau of American Ethnology, wrote me on March 21, 1917, that by all odds the best account of the Chickasaw Indians was the work

of Adair, even though it was marred by his "Arguments" in favor of his favorite theory, for he knew the Chickasaws at first hand, and wrote what he saw and heard.

In addition to the above theories there are two documents, one of Chinese and the other of Scandinavian origin, which undertake to relate the discovery of a country, the first by the Chinese early in the Christian era, wherein the kingdom of Fu-Sang was established, and it is claimed Fu-Sang was upon American soil, hence the descent of the Indians from the Chinese.

The Scandinavian Vikings early discovered Iceland and it is recorded in the Sagas that about the year 981 A. D., Eric the Red, an outlaw of Ireland, discovered Greenland, and the same Sagas or written legends which set forth these discoveries, also relate that subsequent thereto the Vikings made frequent visits to the South, to a land which had been discovered there by one Bjarni, and which was given the name of Vinland about the year 985 A. D.

There is much diversity of opinion as to the trustworthiness of either the Chinese or Scandinavian accounts.

There is a theory also that America was settled by Japanese, as many Japanese junks have drifted to the American coast, some empty, and some with men, but it is said there is no evidence of a Japanese woman having ever arrived in this way.

A cold current flows from the arctic regions down Southward by China, hence it is said no Chinese wreck-

age has ever reached American soil. On the other hand, what we call the Japanese current flows north-westward near the Japanese islands, and as the current runs at the rate of some ten miles an hour, wreckage could well reach America.

While the origin of our Indians is by no means definitely known, still I am strongly inclined to believe that their original ancestors came across Bering's Straits from Asia to Alaska at some very remote period. The straits dividing the continents are variously estimated to be only from 36 to 56 miles across, and in addition there are in it two islands of some considerable extent, and these are about midway between the shores of the two continents and are known as the Diomede Islands, and are inhabited by Eskimos. Besides the straits are often frozen over in winter, so that the hardy natives would find no difficulty whatever in crossing on the ice from Siberia to Alaska.

In 1906, my wife and I were in Nome, Alaska, and after going upon the steamer Olympia to sail for Seattle, a large open boat came alongside containing a jolly family of Eskimos with the peculiarity that the heads of the men were shaved on top; and upon calling attention to this I was told these people were from the Diomede Islands, it being the custom of the men there to shave the top of the head, and that these people often came down the coast several hundred miles to visit at Nome and further down the coast.

Previously on the same trip, after landing at Skagway, we crossed over the coast mountains on the Yukon

and White Pass Railroad, and we reached White Horse, on the Thirty-mile River at the foot of the White Horse Rapids, where we took a steamer for Dawson City, the commercial and political capital of the Yukon territory, and where we remained about one week. Taking another vessel, we continued our voyage down the great Yukon River to Fort Gibbon, where we changed to another steamer which carried us to St. Michaels, in the Bering Sea, and which is the entrepot for the Yukon River country. There we stopped a few days with the family of a friend, Walter Chidester, a very capable and observant man, then the agent for a great commercial concern in that distant part of the world.

I had been much interested in the long voyage of 2000 miles down the Yukon to observe what I could with respect to the native Indians, though not many were to be seen. As we approached the sea, say for about 150 miles from the mouth of the river, it was extremely interesting to me to observe how the Indians gradually shaded off into the Eskimo type. The change appeared in the native garments especially in the Parka of the Eskimo, and in the little igloos shaped like a beehive and well known from pictures we so often see.

Mr. Childester informed me that there were several encampments of Eskimos on the sea shore near his house, and that these hardy natives came from Asia along the Arctic Sea, and thought nothing of crossing Bering's straits and coming down the coast of Alaska, a distance of 500 miles, on a kind of summer trip. Next morning we went down to view the encampment. The

boats they came in did not contain a piece of metal, and doubtless were of the same pattern and kind used from the most remote times. The boats were, according to my estimate, some forty feet long, and wide and deep in proportion to the length. The frame work consisted of driftwood lashed together with rawhide, and the sides or hull was rough walrus rawhide, and of course entirely waterproof.

On leaving their homes in Siberia, all they had to do was to launch their boat, pile in it their children and dogs with such provisions and cooking utensils as they had, and nothing remained except to paddle across the straits, and thence enjoy as happy a voyage down the coast as is given to the children of nature.

The Eskimos have the slanting eyes of the Japanese and Chinese, and are generally plump, very pleasing in their demeanor, and many of them were very good looking, some of the women having a dignified, matronly appearance; and it was said no Eskimo was ever seen to strike a child.

We arrived at Nome on Saturday and that night, under the electric lights of that outpost of civilization, the streets were full of Eskimos of all sexes and ages, dressed in vari colored furs, and these with miners and prospectors from many parts of the earth, presented one of the most picturesque scenes I ever looked upon.

As is well known the Laps inhabit the Northern Arctic regions of Norway, Sweden and a portion of Russia, their country being usually denominated Lapland. While they succeeded in domesticating the reindeer, still

they have no organized government, and owe allegiance to the various countries in which they live.

All ethnologists agree that the Laps are in no way connected with the Eskimos, but are probably related to the Finns, both being a branch of the Asiatic Mongolian race, about whose origin little is known.

The best theory seems to be that the Laps in remote ages lived further South and were gradually driven North by their more powerful neighbors, and in course of time the only asylum that could afford them protection was the frozen North, which accordingly became their permanent home.

On the shores of Arctic Asia the Eskimos commence and continue not only across the Bering Straits, but they inhabit all of the Northern shores and islands of North America, and extend as far as Greenland, which is far out in the Atlantic Ocean. It was once a question how the Eskimos could get to Greenland, but it seems to be now well agreed that they could cross on the ice, and if need be, aided by their water craft.

The Eskimos stretch over a distance of some thousands of miles, counting from those who live in Asia on eastward to Greenland, the Arctic Islands and lands in the far frozen North; and it seems to be agreed that their speech shows a common origin. No other uncivilized people have ever been known to inhabit a country so extensive in length, and in all probability there is no intercourse between those separated by great distances. It would seem, therefore, that the Eskimos on the Arctic shores of Asia were driven there by their Mongolian

neighbors in the South, which finally became their home, as the Laps found a home on the northern shores of Arctic Europe. The features of the Eskimos are of the Mongolian type and I do not think there can be a reasonable doubt that they are of Mongolian origin. It is true that they have their peculiar characteristics, but their mode of life for ages in the Arctic regions, with the intense struggle for existence peculiar to that life would necessarily show variations from the original type.

All the Eskimos I have seen appeared to better advantage both in person and general deportment, as well as in the souvenirs of their own make which they offered for sale, than did the Laps whom I saw in Northern Norway in 1912, on a visit we made that year to the North Cape, commonly called the land of the midnight sun.

Those Laps had a scrawny, dirty appearance, and the trinkets offered for sale seemed to me far inferior to the handiwork of the Eskimos.

That the Indians of North America are either the descendants of Eskimos or Asiatics I scarcely think is doubtful. While the great Yukon River flows for the most part through a great plateau, with considerable forests on its banks, still these trees gradually fade away into mere scrub, within, say 100 miles of the mouth of the river. The evident reason is that trees can not grow on the desolate tundras near the sea precisely as no trees are to be found on the shores of the Arctic Ocean.

I was told that Eskimos lived on the desolate lower reaches of the Yukon, and in fact saw their igloos and could distinguish them by the parkas they wore. As is

well known, Eskimos depend upon the seals, the walrus, and an occasional whale, and other denizens of the sea; whereas the Indian proper depends upon the creatures of the land for a subsistence.

The struggle for existence in either mode of life is severe and would necessarily produce many variations from the original type.

All travelers report that the greatest antipathy exists between Eskimos and the Indians, who sometimes stray upon the hunting grounds of each other. The Eskimos are often at enmity, the one tribe with another. Nothing is better known than that neighboring tribes of Indians were constantly at war, which is the case with practically all uncivilized peoples, and also the practice is not unknown among those nations who claim to be the leaders of civilization.

It is well known that uncivilized peoples who depend upon the chase for sustenance, are nearly always nomads, spending months at a time on distant journeys, following up the game which furnishes them food and raiment.

How easy would it be for a tribe forced up the Yukon by its enemies, or which should take a notion to spy out a happier hunting ground, to go in their canoes to the upper reaches of the Yukon in the summer time? Here they would find not only an abundance of fish in the river and its tributaries, as well as water fowl, but at certain seasons of the year there were to be found millions of caribou as well as the lordly moose, not to mention other game. It is true the caribou migrate and at times go to the South, but it is well known that sav-

age people follow migrating animals, and by following these to their winter homes it would be but a short step to find the countless herds of North American Buffalo or bison, which stretched from Arctic America to the Gulf of Mexico.

Again it is but 112 miles from the upper point of navigation on the headwaters of the Yukon, to Skagway on the Pacific Ocean where the sea never freezes over, and how easy would it be for the aborigines to cross the intervening range of mountains is shown from the fact that it is now crossed on a railway train.

The Peace River country now in British Columbia, though far north has a comparatively mild climate, owing to the warm Chinook winds which blow over the Japan currents of the Pacific and reach that country. This country would be a kind of half-way house between the Arctic regions and the warmer parts of the country stretching toward the far South, for migrating bands of savages.

In considering the possibility or probability of the settlement in America of the Indians, first coming across by way of Bering Straits, we should not consider the subject from the standpoint of a few hundred years, but upon the assumption that in all probability it took some thousands of years for the settlement of the American continents.

Given sufficient time the dispersion might well cover the whole continent; and as a climate, the productions of the soil and other conditions which make it easy to subsist and give leisure for thought and reflection, have

always been the means by which men have first discarded savagery and laid the foundation stones for ultimate civilization, we can realize why it was that there once existed in Peru and Mexico a civilization unknown on the North American continent.

The warm climate and other favoring conditions in those parts of America where there once existed a prehistoric civilization, have often been compared to like climatic conditions in the valley of the Nile and of the Euphrates and Tigris, where, so far as we know, our civilization had its beginning.

It may be remarked here that the Natchez Indians who gave their name to the City of Natchez in Southern Mississippi on the banks of the great river of that name, were the furtherest advanced in their form of government and an organized society, than any other tribe of Indians who dwelt within the boundaries of the United States. No doubt the warm climate, and favoring conditions of life were prime factors in the elevation of this unfortunate people, who were almost exterminated by the French, and as we will see the remnants of that once noted tribe found an asylum and a home among the intrepid Chickasaws, who haughtily and successfully defied all the powers of the French when they demanded the surrender of the Natchez from the Chickasaws.

I have never seen the ruins of South or Central America that have been uncovered and so extensively written about and photographed, especially in these later years.

I passed on the train near the earth pyramids not far from Mexico City, and saw in that city the great Calendar stone and other remnants of a past civilization. In the same year (1908) we went down to the State of Oaxaca, far south of Mexico City, to see the ruins of Mitla, which are not far distant from Oaxaca. No one can view these ruins except with feelings of astonishment; and yet we are told that when Cortez first passed through that country about 1520, that the half barbarous people who lived near these ruins had no more knowledge as to who were the builders of the splendid solid stone edifices which once adorned that country, than have the half naked Indians we saw there.

Between the City of Oaxaca and the ruins of Mitla stands the celebrated Tule tree, said to be the oldest and largest tree in the world. It measured 154 feet in circumference and was of sufficient importance to attract the attention of Alexander Von Humboldt, who placed a tablet on the tree commemorative of his visit (as I remember) in 1804, a part of which has been covered by new growth of the tree, which still continues to grow.

It was on this trip that Humboldt traveled over South America, and thence northward up through Central America, Mexico, and into the United States. He traveled over most of the world, especially through the remote and uncivilized countries, was learned in almost every branch of knowledge and was one of the greatest intellectualities of the Nineteenth Century. Probably no man was better capacitated to express an opinion as to the origin of the American Indians than Humboldt.

In Volume 1, page 13 of "The Great Republic by Master Historians," Humboldt is quoted as saying:

> "It appears most evident to me, that the monuments, methods of computing time, systems of cosmogony, and many myths of America, offer striking analogies with the ideas of eastern Asia—analogies which indicate an ancient communication, and are not simply the result of that uniform condition in which all nations are found in the dawn of civilization."

When Cortez with fire and sword and a savagery rivaling Attila, "The scourge of God," destroyed the Montezumas of Mexico City, at the same time and under the plea of destroying paganism and extending the Christian religion he likewise destroyed all the records of the civilization which he found in Mexico. In all probability the loss caused by this destruction, robbed mankind of the only clue which might have led to a knowledge of the origin of the American aborigines.

In the present state of knowledge, the conclusion of Humboldt is about all that can now be said with any degree of certainty, upon this most interesting subject.

CHAPTER II.

AS TO THE ORIGIN OF THE CHICKASAW NATION.

As we have seen, the origin of the race of the American Indian is wrapped in mystery, so likewise when we endeavor to trace the early history of the Chickasaw Nation as an integral part of the Indian race, we will likewise find that we are without authentic history and must depend upon legends and traditions as our only sources of information.

I am by no means unmindful of the weakness, not to say untrustworthiness, of this kind of evidence; nevertheless having no other, we will briefly look to these sources as furnishing some slight indication as to the earliest home of the Chickasaws.

There are several versions as to the manner in which the Chickasaws reached their home in what is now North Mississippi, and there found an abiding place. De Soto was the first white man to enter their country in December, 1540, and there they were again found after the lapse of more than a century, by the first white men who explored their country.

It seems to me that these traditions point to Old Mexico as the original home of the Chickasaws.

I have referred to Adair as an authority on Chickasaw history, and next to him, I regard H. B. Cushman as probably the most reliable of those who have given

accounts of the Chickasaws. Lincecum is also a good authority.

In 1899 Cushman published a volume of 607 pages, entitled "History of the Choctaw, Chickasaw and Natchez Indians," the Greenville, Texas, Headlight Printing House being the publisher, the paper being very poor but the type good. I had difficulty in procuring a copy of the book, which I finally did through the efforts of my friend, W. W. Alsobrook, who had resided many years in Greenville, and who was told by a niece of Cushman that he died in 1904.

Cushman states that his parents left Massachusetts in 1820, and went to the Choctaw Indians as missionaries, among whom they labored the balance of their lives, and died the sincere and admiring friends of the Red men of the forest; that he was reared among the Indians and was intimately acquainted with them during the vicissitudes of a life extending to near four score of years; that he had obtained in these years a fund of information not theretofore published, and he evidently deemed it a sacred duty to place it in permanent form for the benefit of posterity, and especially in justice to the Indians whom he admired and loved so much.

The wrongs and injustices towards the Indians by white men evidently so oppressed the mind and sympathies of Cushman, that throughout his lengthy book he constantly declaims against the oppressors of the Indians, and in this way detracts from the value of his conclusions as an impartial historian. However, his per-

fect sincerity and honesty of purpose in stating exactly what he saw and heard, cannot be doubted.

There is no index or even chapters to his book, and it would seem that the one thought constantly with him was to put in permanent form not only all he knew about the Choctaws, Chickasaws and Natchez Indians, but to weave into his book what he knew of other Indians, together with his conclusions with respect to the treatment of the Indians in general by the white men of this country.

The first 414 pages of the book are devoted to the Choctaws; the next 115 pages to the Chickasaws, and the remainder to the Natchez Indians, and various other subjects.

I have thus referred to Adair, Cushman and Lincecum, because I intend to quote from them liberally as authentic sources of information, which I do the more readily as the first two are practically out of the reach of the general reading public.

How the Indians Preserved Historical Events—

The impression is general that the Indians were without any means of recording matters of great interest or import, and that they depended entirely upon their memories in transmitting current events to posterity, but Cushman says:

> "As aids to memory they used various devices, among which belts of wampum were the chief. Wampum was truly the archives of the tribe among

all North American Indians. It was made of dressed deer skin, soft and pliable as cloth, and interwoven with various shells cut into uniform size, carefully polished, strung together and painted in different colors, all of which were significant; white being the emblem of peace and friendship; red, the symbol of hostility and war. As the colors of the wampum were significant, so also were the length and breadth of these belts, and also the peculiar arrangements of the differently painted strings attached, each and all fully understood by the Indians alone. A belt of wampum was presented to one tribe by another as a remembrance token of any important event that was communicated. They had many and various kinds of wampum; some in the form of belts of different breadth and length; some in strings of various width and length, all reaching back in regular order to centuries of the remote past, with an accuracy incredible to the White Race.

The wampum was the Indians' history, the chronicles of the past; and the leaders of each clan of the tribe, from one generation to another were carefully and thoroughly instructed by their predecessors for that particular business and were held in the highest esteem by all Indians everywhere.
* * *

Pictures, rudely carved on rocks and trees, were used to convey information, each figure being a true symbol understood and fully comprehended by the Indians wherever seen" (See pages 35-36).

It is evident that this mode of recording current events was far from perfect, and was liable to many misinterpretations.

Traditions of a Western Origin—

All agree, however, that the Chickasaws belonged to the Muskhogean family of Indians, the family name being spelled variously, as Muscogee, Muskogee, Muskhogies, Muscogulgee, etc.

The principal nations composing the Muskhogeans were the Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creek and Chockchoomas; and the country occupied by them extended from the Gulf of Mexico up the east side of the Mississippi River, then up the Ohio to the dividing ridge between the Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers, and on eastward to the Atlantic Ocean. East Tennessee, and the mountainous portions of Georgia, Virginia, and Kentucky were occupied by the warlike and fine Cherokees, who constituted a Southern branch of the Iroquois Indians, whose main country lay further north.

There were included in the above general description of the Muskhogean country many small tribes who were not Muskhogeans; such as the noted Natchez Indians, the Biloxis, Tunicas, Tensas, Yazoos, Koroas and Pascagoulas, but the members of these tribes were for the most part inconsiderable, while the Muskhogeans were much larger and warlike, often fighting each other.

There appears to have been a well defined tradition among all the Muskhogeans, pointing to the West, and probably Old Mexico as their former home. It is of interest here, to recall that the great Cherokee Indian, Sequoyah, conceived the idea that by tracing out some common idioms in the various Indian languages, he could eventually determine the origin of the Cherokees and

other Indians; and in his old age he traveled to the far West and was overtaken by death at the advanced age of eighty-two, among the mountains of Tamaulipas, Mexico.

Adair says the Choctaws and Chickasaws were the descendants of a people called Chickemacaws; who were among the first inhabitants of the Mexican Empire; and at an ancient period wandered eastward with a tribe of Indians called Choccomaws, and finally crossed the Mississippi River with ten thousand warriors.

Cushman supposes that the names Choctaw and Chickasaw were derived from the above names, and says that in 1820 the aged Choctaws related to the missionaries that their ancestors in a remote period dwelt in the far West, and being conquered and oppressed by a more powerful people, resolved to seek a new country, going to the East.

A great council of the whole nation was called, and after great deliberation and much discussion, the nation started forth under the leadership of two brothers, Chahtah and Chikasah, both equally renowned for their bravery in war and their wisdom in council.

After much prayer and supplication, the Great Spirit had revealed to their chief medicine men and prophets that they should erect a pole (Fa-bus-sah in their language) in the midst of their camp standing straight up, and that each morning they should carefully observe the way it leaned and follow in that direction, and the first morning as it leant to the east they started on their long journey toward the rising sun.

Each night the pole was set up in the midst of the camp, alternately by the brothers, Chahtah and Chikasah, and each morning it still pointed to the east, and for months they passed over plains, mountains and through forests, much of the country abounding in game and inviting the pilgrims to settle there, but the talismanic pole continued to point eastward and the nation followed its silent admonitions.

Says Cushman:

> "After many months of wearisome travel, suddenly a vast body of flowing water stretched its mighty arm athwart in their path. With unfeigned astonishment they gathered in groups upon its banks and gazed upon its turbid waters. Never before had they even heard of, or in all their wanderings stumbled upon aught like this. Whence its origin? Where its terminus? This is surely the Great Father the true source of all waters, whose age is wrapt in the silence of the unknown past, ages beyond all calculation, and as they then and there named it 'Misha Sipokni' (Beyond Age, whose source and terminus are unknown). * * * Is Misha Sipokni to be the terminus of their toils? Are the illimitable forests that so lovingly embraced in their wide extended arms its restless waters to be their future homes? Not so. Silent and motionless, still as ever before, it bows to the east and its mandate, 'Onward, beyond Misha Sipokni,' is accepted without a murmur; and at once they proceed to construct canoes and rafts by which, in a few weeks, all were safely landed upon its eastern banks, whence again was resumed their eastward march, and so continued until they stood upon the western banks of the Yazoo River and once more encamped for the night; and, as had been done for many months before, ere evening began to unfold

her curtains, and twilight had spread o'er all, her mystic light, the Fabussa (now truly their Delphian oracle) was set up; but ere the morrow's sun had plainly lit up the eastern horizon, many anxiously watching eyes that early rested upon its straight, slender, silent form, observed it stood erect as when set up the evening before, and then was borne upon the morning breeze throughout the vast sleeping encampment, the joyful acclamation! 'Fohah hupishno Yak! Fohah hupishno Yak!' (Pro. as Fo-hah, Rest, hup-ish-noh, we, all of us, Yak, here).

Now their weary pilgrimage was ended, and flattering hope portrayed their future destiny in the bright colors of peace, prosperity and happiness. Then as commemorative of this great event in their national history, they threw up a large mound embracing three acres of land and rising forty feet in a conical form, with a deep hole about ten feet in diameter excavated on the top, and all enclosed by a ditch encompassing nearly twenty acres. After its completion, it was discovered not to be erect, but a little leaning, and they named it Nunih (mountain or mound, Waiyah, leaning, pro. as Nunih Wai-yah).

This relic of the remote past still stands half buried in the accummulated rubbish of years unknown, disfigured also by the desecrating touch of Time, which has plainly left his finger-marks of decay upon it, blotting out its history, with all others of its kind, those memorials of ages past erected by the true Native American, about which so much has been said in conjecture, and so much written in speculation, that all now naturally turn to anything from their modern conjectures and speculations with much doubt and great misgivings" (See pages 64-65).

Some years afterwards, Chahtah and Chikasah disagreed on some question of state, and decided to separate with their respective followers, the choice of the countries to be decided by a game of chance, with the result that the northern part of the country fell to Chikasah and his people, while the southern part fell to Chahtah and his followers.

Did the Separation Take Place in the West—

Dr. Gideon Lincecum lived among the Choctaws for years and spoke their language fluently, and his autobiography will be found in VIII Publications, Mississippi Historical Society Papers, at page 443; and at page 521 of the same volume there is an interesting account by Dr. Lincecum of the Choctaw traditions about their settlement in Mississippi, and the origin of their mounds, the account extending to page 542.

On page 543 of the same volume, Harry Warren also has an interesting article on "Chickasaw Traditions, Customs, etc." While differing as to some of the details, still the accounts given by these three authors, and also that of Schoolcraft, as quoted by Warren, agree in the main, one important exception being that, according to Lincecum, the separation between Chahtah and Chikasah took place long before they reached their new home, for he says:

> "About thirty winters after they had stopped at Nunih Waya, a party of hunters who had progressed a little further north than usual, fell in with

a camp of hunters belonging to the Chickasha tribe. After finding that they spoke the same language with themselves, the Chahtahs approached their camp in a friendly manner, and remained several days. The older men amongst them being familiar with the traditional history of the journeyings of their respective tribes, took much pleasure in communicating to each other an account of their travels. From the point where the two tribes separated, the Chickashas diverged widely to the left, found an extremely rough and scarce country for some time, but at last emerging from the mountains on to the wide spread plains, they found the buffalo and other game plentiful. They continued to travel, with only an occasional halt, to rest the women and the feeble ones, until they came to the great river, at the place called by them sakti ahlopulli (bluff crossing)—'white people call it now Chickasaw Bluffs,' said the old man: They made shift to cross the great river, and traveling onward, the leader's pole came to a stand at a place called Chickasha Old Town in a high and beautiful country. The leader's pole stood at this place three winters, at the end of which time the pole was found leaning to the northeast. They set out again and crossed another big river (little prairie near Huntsville, Ala.). The pole remained there erect only one winter. At mulberry time the ensuing summer, the pole was found leaning almost directly to the south. They packed up, and crossing many bold running rivers, the pole still leaning onward, until they came to a large river, near where it emptied into the great okhuta (ocean).

At this beautiful country (below where Savannah, Georgia, now stands), the pole stood erect many winters. The fish, opa haksum, oko folush (oysters, clams) and all manner of shell fish and fowl and small game were plentiful. The people obtained full supplies of provisions with but little

labor. In the process of time, however, the people became sickly, and they were visited with a very great plague. They called the plague hoita lusa (black vomit) because the people died, vomiting black matter, resembling powdered fire coals and fish slime. All that took it were sick but a day or two and died so fast that the people became frightened and ran off, leaving great numbers of the dead unburied. They followed the leader's pole back nearly over the same route they went, until finally they returned to the place where the pole made its first stand (Chickasha Old Towns). Here it stood again, and remained erect until it rotted." (See pp. 539-540.)

There are other evidences that the Chickasaws once lived near where Savannah, Georgia, now is, and the sea coast, and it is a fact that they laid claim to a scope of country in that vicinity before Congress as late as 1795.

It is also true that the Chickasaws, or a part of them, once lived at the Mussel Shoals, now in North Alabama, a fact stated by Piomingo at the Great Conference in Nashville in 1792, in giving the boundaries of the Chickasaw country.

There is one other interesting feature of the above quotation from Lincecum, and that is, that the Chickasaws first crossed the great river at the Chickasaw Bluffs, presumably where Memphis now stands.

The Indians Were the Mound Builders—

There is one feature of the migration legends treated at length by Lincecum that seems to have been overlooked or not treated by Cushman; and that is the bringing by the Indians of vast quantities of the bones of their deceased ancestors to their new home.

According to Lincecum, who claimed to have derived all of his information from the wise men of the Choctaws, the migration covered a period of forty-three years, and the people were loaded down with the bones of their ancestors to such an extent as to make further progress almost impossible.

A safe depository for the repose of these bones was one of the chief reasons for building the great mound in their new home, as well as to raise a monument to their triumphant march and successful settlement towards the rising sun.

Commencing at page 529, Lincecum says:

> "Men were then appointed to select an appropriate place for the mound to be erected on, and to direct the work while in progress. They selected a level piece of sandy land, not far from the middle creek; laid it off in an oblong square and raised the foundation by piling up earth which they dug up some distance to the north of the foundation. It was raised and made level as high as a man's head and beat down very hard. It was then floored with cypress bark before the work of placing the sacks of bones commenced. The people gladly brought forward and deposited their bones until there were none left. The bones, of themselves, had built up an immense mound. They brought the cypress bark, which was neatly placed on, till the bone sacks were all closely covered in, as dry as a tent. While the tool carriers were working with the bark, women

and children and all the men, except the hunters, carried earth continually, until the bark was all covered from sight constituting a mound half as high as the tallest forest tree." (See pages 529-530.)

In a note to page 530, he says:

"I visited this celebrated mound in 1843. I found it rounded off, oblong square, 200 yards in circumference at its base; 80 feet in height, with a flat space on the top 52 yards in length by 25 yards in width, the whole mound was thickly set with large forest trees, 200 yards to the north of it is a lake, which I suppose to be the place whence they carried the earth to construct the mound."

Lincecum further set forth that he further learned that in the remote past, the Chickasaws were threatening an invasion of the Choctaw country, when a great council was called, which resolved to and did build a great wall around their two principal mounds, and also enclosing a space sufficient to contain all the women and children, as well as the aged and infirm, in case they were besieged. The wall was built of the height of two men, and had in it only two openings, one on the east and the other on the west, of five steps each in width for the egress and ingress of the people until Nunih Waya should be actually invaded by the enemy.

In a note to page 542 Lincecum says:

"I went all around this earth wall in 1843. It seemed to be a complete circle, and from one and a half to two miles in circumference, the southeastern portion cutting the bluff of Nunih Waya creek. Many places in the wall were still eight feet in height. The two gaps in the wall had never been filled up."

Both Cushman and Lincecum attest that even in their day there were professional bone pickers, whose duties consisted in removing all the flesh of deceased Choctaws from the bones, which were carefully and religiously stored away in mounds, or rather, they were laid away in the Common Mausoleum of the Choctaws, each addition being carefully covered with earth until the mounds often reached large proportions.

Quoting his Choctaw informant, Lincecum says:

> "Now my white friend, I have explained to you the origin, and who it was that built the great number of mounds that are found scattered over this wide land. The circular conic mounds are al' graves, and mark the spot where the persons, for whom they were built, breathed their last breath. There being no bone pickers at the hunting camps to handle the dead, the body was never touched, or moved from the death posture. Just as it lay, or sat, as the case might be, it was covered up, first with either stones, pebbles or sand, and finished off with earth. In this way the custom of mound graves originated from the great mound graves, Nunih Waya, and it prevailed with the Choctaw people until the white man came with his destructive sense-killing 'fire water' and made the people all drunk." (See pp. 533-534.)

Of course there were other structures erected for defensive and war like purposes, such as the construction of the wall described by Lincecum.

Traditions Also Point to an Asiatic Origin—

I will here quote at large from Cushman, which indicates an Asiatic origin for the Chickasaws, according to tradition, as follows:

"The ancient traditions of the Cherokees, as well as the ancient traditions of the Muscogees (Creeks) and the Natchez also point back to Mexico as the country from which they, in a period long past, moved to their ancient possessions east of the Mississippi River. But whether they preceded the Choctaws and Chickasaws or came after, their traditions are silent.

Milfort (page 269) says: Big Warrior, Chief of the Cherokees, as late as 1822, not only confirms their traditions that Mexico was their native country, but goes back to a more remote period for their origin and claims that his ancestors came from Asia crossing Behring Straits in their canoes; thence down the Pacific Coast to Mexico; thence to the country east of the Mississippi River, where they were first known to the Europeans.

Mr. Gaines, United States Agent to the Choctaws in 1810, asked Apushamatahaubi (pro. Arpush-ah-ma-tar-hah-ub-ih) the most renowned chief of the Choctaws since their acquaintance with the white race, concerning the origin of his people, who replied: 'A hattaktikba bushi-aioktulla hosh hopaki fehna moma ka minti' (Pro. as Arn (my) hut-tarktik-ba (forefather) hush-ih ai-o-kah-tullah (the west, mo-mah (all) meen-tih (came) ho-par-kih (far) feh-nah (very)).

And the same response was always given by all the ancient Choctaws living east of the Mississippi River, when the inquiry was made of them, Whence their origin? By this they only referred to the country in which their forefathers long dwelt prior to their exodus to the east of the Mississippi River; as they also had a tradition that their forefathers came from a country beyond the 'Big Waters' far to the northwest, crossing a large body of water in their canoes of a day's travel, thence down the Pacific coast to Mexico, the same as the Cherokees.

In conversation with an aged Choctaw in the year 1884 (Robert Nail, a long known friend), upon the subject, he confirmed the tradition by stating that his people came first from Asia by way of the Behring Straits. He was a man well versed in geography, being taught in boyhood by the missionaries prior to their removal from their eastern homes to their present abode north of Texas. The Muscogees, Shawnees, Delawares, Chippeways and other tribes also have the same traditions pointing beyond Behring Straits to Asia as the land whence their forefathers came in ages past. Some of their traditions state that they crossed the Strait on the ice, the Chippeways for one, but the most, according to their traditions, crossed in their canoes. But that the ancestors of the North American Indians came at some unknown period in the remote past from Asia to the North American Continent, there can be no doubt." (See pp. 66-67.)

Conclusion—

From the foregoing, I think it may be safely concluded that the Chickasaws, Choctaws, and in fact the entire Muskhogean family, in remote times came to the country now comprising the Gulf States and reaching to the Atlantic Ocean, from the far west, and in all probability from what is now the Mexican Republic, and more remotely from Asia.

The legends and traditions to this effect had become a part of the religious history of the Indians. The wanderings of the Indians under the leadership of Chahtah and Chickasah in quest of a new home, and their many privations and sufferings, was not only as real, but as sacred to them, and as of as deep a religious signification, as is the forty years of wandering in the wilderness

of the Jews under Moses and Joshua, to the Israelites and the Christian world at the present time.

A great national event of such a character sinks deep into the consciousness of a people and will persist through ages.

In addition to the wampum device, already noticed, for the preservation of historical facts, it was the custom of the Chickasaws and Choctaws to select, say, about twenty youths of each generation, who were carefully instructed by their wise men in their past history as well as in all things deemed advisable for the public well being.

If it be said that there are too many variations or differences in the traditions so handed down from generation to generation, then it may be truly replied that such variations are inseparable attendants upon all efforts to preserve records of past events.

Thus, the four gospels recording the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth, vary in many particulars, although he spoke as never man spake. However, taken as a whole, the gospels are complete.

While Indian traditions fall in rank far below the written history of any civilized people, still my conclusion is as indicated above.

The suggestion of Cushman that the Muskhogeans were driven from Mexico by the fire and sword of the marauder Cortez, is entirely untenable, when we reflect that the expedition of De Soto was only some twenty years later than that of Cortez; and that when De Soto passed the winter of 1540-1541 with the Chickasaws, they appear to have been well seated at their homes, and there was nothing to indicate that they had recently been driven from Mexico.

CHAPTER III.

THE DAWN OF HISTORY FOR THE CHICKASAWS.

The sixteenth century opened with the dawn of brighter days for civilized man throughout the world. A new world had been discovered, a quickening impulse had been given to art, science was awakening, and the diffusion of knowledge becoming more general, the renaissance was flowering into a fuller fruition. The shackles of ignorance and superstition which had bound the minds and hearts of mankind, with far more rigor and cruelty than the iron which bound their bodies, were being gradually unloosened; still centuries were to elapse before men were to be indeed really free, a consummation not even yet fully realized.

The spirit of adventure and discovery, like a young Hercules, was rejoicing in its vigor and achievements.

Soon Pizarro in Peru, Pedrarias in Central America and Cortez in Mexico had overrun and devastated these countries; and returning to Spain brought enormous wealth, which excited the imagination, and it may be added the cupidity of mankind.

There had been born in Xerez (otherwise Jerez), in Spain, of a noble family, but without fortune, a boy named Hernandez, sometimes written Fernandez, and which is the equivalent for the English Hernando. It appears he lived at a place in Spain called Soto, and following the customs of those days he was, in after

years, called Hernando De Soto; that is Hernando of Soto. He possessed talents more valuable than wealth, having a clear and vigorous understanding, a quick apprehension, and courage of the highest order, which made him a born ruler of men. He enlisted as a soldier of fortune in the Peru and Central American Expeditions; was a captain in Nicaragua, lieutenant-general in the conquest of Peru, and returning to Spain it is reported he brought with him, as his part of the spoils, one hundred thousand peso de oro, equivalent to about three hundred thousand dollars, an almost incredible fortune for those days.

He was liberal and lavish of his wealth, lending a large sum to the Emporer, and drew around him many of the most daring and ablest young noblemen and adventurers, some of them also of great wealth.

Being now in the vigor of life De Soto appears to have resided in Xerez, and at court, probably, he met the widow of Pedrarias, with whom he had been acquainted in Nicaragua, first cousin to the celebrated Marchioness of Moya, lady of honor and life-long favorite of Ysabel of Castilla. With her he contracted for a love marriage with her daughter, named after her, Ysabel de Bobadilla, and De Soto sent her a wedding gift of six thousand ducats.

As showing the devotion of the young wife, it may be remarked, that she accompanied De Soto on his ill-fated expedition to Florida as far as Cuba; that after waiting in vain for three years in expectancy of a happy reunion, she died of a broken heart in three days after

hearing of the death of her Lord, in the wilds of America, and his burial in the great Mississippi River, which is inseparably linked with his name.

Having achieved his highest ambitions in the land of his nativity De Soto looked with longing eyes again to the new world, and dreamed of the acquisition of still greater wealth and the building of a new empire in Florida, a name denoting a vast and unexplored country, of indeterminate boundaries, co-extensive, probably with one-half of the North American Continent.

In Florida Ponce de Leon had sought in vain for the fountain of youth, finding instead his own grave.

Soon thereafter Cabeca de Vaca returned from Florida, stating that he and four others were the only survivors of the armament sent out under the command of Panfilo de Narvaez to whom the "island of Florida," and the adjacent country had been granted, upon his successful exploring and subduing the same.

Like Ponce de Leon, de Narvaez found death, in his attempted subjugation of Florida; but these failures but fired the imagination and strengthened the purpose of De Soto to achieve the conquest of Florida.

The details of this great enterprise is outside the scope of this sketch. Suffice it to say that in consideration of the fitting out of an armament and the conquest and colonization of Florida, the Emperor was to grant many concessions to De Soto, who was then made Governor of Florida, and when successful in his enterprise

he was to be Governor and Captain-General, with the dignity of Adelantado for life, and High Sheriff in perpetuity to his heirs, over a part of the conquered country.

De Soto Lands in Florida—

On Friday, May 30, 1539, De Soto disembarked his expeditionary force which consisted, according to Biedma, of six hundred and twenty men, two hundred and twenty-three horses, besides many hogs, and equipments necessary for such an extensive expedition, the landing being made in the vicinity of the present Tampa, Florida.

Quite soon after the expedition began its journey it was so fortunate as to find with the Indians a Spaniard named Juan Ortiz, who had been captured nine years before while a member of the Narvaez expedition. He was entirely naked, brown and in appearance an Indian, speaking their language fluently, which made him almost invaluable as an interpreter. His duplicity when the expedition reached the country of the Chickasaws was one of the causes that came near destroying the entire army.

The one thing that led the expedition ever onward, further and further, was the expectation of finding gold and silver and other treasures; in short they were seeking a new El Dorado.

They had only gone a few leagues on their journey when they came to the Province of Paracoxi, and the Gentlemen of Elvas says:

> "They were asked if they had knowledge, or information of any country where gold and silver might be found in plenty; to which they answered yes; that towards the sunset was a Province called

> Cale, the inhabitants of which were at war with those of territories where the greater portion of the year was summer, and where there was so much gold, that when the people came to make war upon those of Cale, they wore golden hats like casques.
>
> As the Cacique had not come, Gallegos, reflecting, suspected the message designed for delay, that he might put himself in a condition of safety; and fearing that, if those men were suffered to depart, they might never return, he ordered them to be chained together, and sent the news to camp by eight men on horseback. The governor, hearing what had passed, showed great pleasure, as did the rest who were with him, believing what the Indians said might be true."

This naive statement of the untutored Red men furnishes an example of the manner in which the Indians sought to get rid of their unwelcome visitors; or in the lingo of the cantonments in these war times, they were simply "passing the buck," to De Soto and his men.

From the four narratives it is next to impossible to mark out with any degree of precision the route followed by De Soto in his wanderings; but it is reasonably certain, speaking in present day geographical terms, that he passed northward from Florida into Georgia and possibly into South Carolina; thence northwest, and in crossing upper Georgia, De Soto sent two Spaniards with Indians, northward to the Province of Chisca, for he was told by the Cacique of Acoste that in the Province of Chisca there was a forge

> "for copper or other metal of that color, though brighter, having a much finer hue, and was to appearances much better, but was not so much used

> for being softer; which was the statement that had been given in Cutifachiqui, where we had seen some chopping-knives that were said to have a mixture of gold" (Elvas, p. 77).

It is generally agreed that this Chisca was in Tennessee; but it was not in Middle Tennessee where the map Bourne attached to Vol. 2 of his Trail Makers, places it. The pioneers in East Tennessee found near what is now Ducktown, in Polk County, an extremely rich copper district, which for years and now is being worked with great profit. Of course no gold was found, a fact not referred to by the two Spaniards, though they did report that the mountains were so high, "it was impossible the army should march in that direction"; and the same mountains stand this day barring the approach to the copper district from the south, precisely as they did to the army of De Soto, now near four hundred years ago.

The expedition then went southwestward until it came to Mauilla, near where Mobile, Alabama, now is; and there a great battle with the Indians was fought. It was the most disastrous to the expedition up to that time, the results of which are stated by Elvas:

> 'They who perished there were in all two thousand five hundred, a few more or less; of the Christians there fell eighteen, among whom was Don Carlos, brother-in-law of the governor; one Juan de Gamez, a nephew; Men, Rodriguez, a Portuguese; and Juan Vazquez, of Villanueva de Barcarota, men of condition and courage; the rest were infantry. Of the living, one hundred and fifty Christians had received seven hundred wounds from

the arrow; and God was pleased that they should be healed in little time of very dangerous injuries. Twelve horses died, and seventy were hurt. The clothing the Christians carried with them, the ornaments for saying mass, and the pearls, were burned there; they having set the fire themselves, because they considered the loss less than the injury they might receive of the Indians from within the houses, where they had brought the things together.

The governor learning in Mauilla that Francisco Maldonado was waiting for him in the port of Ochuse, six days' travel distant, he caused Juan Ortiz to keep the news secret, that he might not be interrupted in his purpose; because the pearls he wished to send to Cuba for show that their fame might raise the desire of coming to Florida, had been lost, and he feared that, hearing of him without seeing either gold or silver, or other things of value from that land, it would come to have such reputation that no one would be found to go there when men should be wanted; so he determined to send no news of himself until he should have discovered a rich country."

This was a fatal decision for De Soto in his search for riches. He had lost up to this time one hundred and two of his faithful followers, and was eventually to lose his own life in the wilderness.

However, as he was seeking fame, he soon found it; for in the discovery of the Mississippi River he more surely enrolled his name in the annals of fame, than if he had discovered mines of silver and gold richer than all his dreams of avarice.

De Soto Reaches the Chickasaws—

With both interest and pleasure we come now to follow in the footsteps of De Soto to the land of the Chickasaws. By some strange imperfection in the histories which have covered the countries where the Chickasaws formerly dwelt, scant notice has been given to that noble nation; and the debt of gratitude due to them from the English speaking world has never been duly acknowledged. Some historians are like less learned people in at least one respect; and that is, they sometimes copy or repeat what others have said, without an inquiry into original sources of information, Error thus becomes self propagating. Of this the Chickasaws have a right to complain, as well as all who are interested to know where De Soto discovered the Great Mississippi River, an event of world-wide importance.

We are indebted to Edward Gaylord Bourne, professor of history in Yale University, for the narratives of De Soto published "in the Trail Makers Series;" but he has fallen into errors which have been followed by others, as will appear more at large hereinafter.

On the first page of his preface, and speaking of the importance of De Soto's discoveries, he said:

> "It was the first extensive exploration of at least six of our Southern States, and their written history opens with the narratives which tell its story; these same narratives contain the earliest descriptions which we possess of the life and manners of the Southern Indians so famous in literature and history the Choctaws, the Cherokees, the Creeks, and the Seminoles; these narratives also record the discovery of the Mississippi River and the story of the first voyage upon it by Europeans."

I commend what is said as to the historical value of De Soto's discoveries; but if Bourne is that careful and dependable historian which Rowland and Lewis would have us believe, then why did he omit in the above statement to mention the Chickasaw Indians, the only tribe mentioned in the De Soto narratives which can be identified by the name attributed to them by the De Soto narratives, and which they bear to this day?

Elvas and Ranjel wrote their name Chicaca; Biedma and Garcilaso, Chicaza; Adair who knew them in 1735, and lived with them wrote it Chickkasah; the Great John Wesley in 1736 wrote it Chickasaws, while we now write the name Chickasaw, the name thus identifying this tribe, and this tribe only by name, of all those visited by De Soto, who found them at precisely the same place where they continued to live until their removal to the Indian Territory in 1836.

The De Soto narratives will be searched in vain for either of the names Choctaw, Cherokee, Creek or Seminole, or any near approach thereto. Why omit to mention not only the Indian nation which we know positively De Soto visited, but which by its valor and superiority deserved especial notice; which entertained De Soto and supplied all his wants during a most severe winter; and when insulted and mistreated came near destroying the entire expedition?

Does not such an omission and mistakes hereafter to be noted, awaken a doubt as to the conclusions reached by those who make them as to matters of great moment,

where others equally learned have come to a different conclusion?

De Soto had lost up to the time he left Mauilla one hundred and two of his faithful followers, and he turned northward, and on December 14, 1540, he came to the River Chucaca, evidently named for the Chickasaws, and now known as the Tombigbee.

When De Soto indicated his purpose to cross the river the Chickasaws disputed his passage; whereupon De Soto sent an Indian messenger to the Cacique,

> "to say that if he wished his friendship he should quietly wait for him; but they killed the messenger before his eyes, and with loud yells departed.
>
> He crossed the river the seventeenth of December, and arrived the same day at Chicaca, a small town of twenty houses. There the people underwent severe cold, for it was already winter, and snow fell; the greater number then were lying in the fields, it being before they had time to put up habitations. The land was thickly inhabited, the people living about over it as they do in Mauilla; and as it was fertile, the greater part being under cultivation, there was plenty of maize. So much grain was brought together as was needed for getting through with the season." (Elvas, p. 100.)

The Original Chickasaws as They Were—

We have followed De Soto into the land of the Chickasaws. He and his followers were the first white men to visit their country and to look into their faces. They were great travelers and ever on the alert, and the news that De Soto had put other Indians into chains and captivity as well as the news of the battle at Mauilla had

doubtless reached the Chickasaws long before the expedition had reached their country. Biedma says the expedition was detained at the river three days before a passage was effected, which was finally accomplished and the expedition installed for the winter as shown above.

It seems to me as this is the dawn of history for the Chickasaws, and that history not written by them, but by the Spaniards, who delighted to call themselves CHRISTIANS, it is highly important to inquire what manner of people were the original Chickasaw who roamed the forest when first seen by white men. Here is a brief pen picture of that splendid race now almost extinct in the course of a few years. The average citizen believes that our Chickasaws were a shiftless kind of savage, wandering over the country, living in bark or skin tepees and depending entirely upon the chase and fishing for a living. This is a very great mistake. They were a self-reliant, self-respecting people; and it may be added they required others to respect them. They had good houses, suitable to their condition and means of building, to live in, those for the summer months being somewhat different from those they lived in for the winter, which were so constructed as to be warmer and more comfortable.

Their houses were not only clean, but their lives pure, and their women were gracious, many of them very handsome; and what is more important they were chaste and pure, for Haywood, regarded as the father of his history in Tennessee, assures us that no Chickasaw girl was ever known to give birth to a child before wedlock. Of how many so-called civilized people can this be said?

And moreover there were no orphans in the Chickasaw Nation; nor was there need for an orphan asylum.

It is true that fathers and mothers died leaving little children, and the fathers were often slain in battle, but under their system of laws governing these matters, when a child became motherless and fatherless, then that child was immediately placed with some near designated relative, able to care for the child, which became thereby adopted into this new family, and was as much a member thereof, and received the same love and care as the children born to the parents of the family. And the Chickasaws made no difference between these adopted children and those of their own blood. Are not these matters of family purity, and the loving care and solicitude lavished upon helpless orphanage, evidences of a nobility of character worthy of imitation even among the most civilized and refined people on this globe?

At the same time the Chickasaw warriors were the bravest of the brave, and for fidelity of character they were the peers of any nation of ancient or modern times. There was, comparatively speaking, but a handful of them, estimated by various authorities, and at various times from two thousand to four thousand souls.

The Choctaws, Creeks and Cherokees mentioned by Bourne in the excerpt quoted above, each one of them, had as many warriors as the Chickasaws had warriors, women and children, aged and infirm put together, and yet the Chickasaws were more than a match for either of these tribes, and defied all comers.

Their home country and hunting grounds comprised the vast and splendid domain described by Piomingo hereinbefore quoted, over which they were the acknowledged overlords, and no Indian nation, however large, dared dispute their overlordship.

As to their form of government, it was one of the purest democracies. There was a Chief, sometimes called by writers a King, because his duties and prerogatives resembled those of a king. However, they were never guilty of the folly of having a hereditary ruling king, or other hereditary rulers or classes. A Chickasaw became Chief or a subordinate Chief, by the choice of the Nation solely because he had achieved that distinction by deeds for the nation that entitled him to leadership. He enjoyed that distinction only so long as his merits entitled him thereto.

They never went to war except after the most careful deliberation of all the warriors, followed by fasting and prayer to the "Beloved One that dwelleth in the blue sky," for his aid and protection in the impending conflict. In war they neither gave or expected quarter, and would die at the burning stake without uttering a word of pain or a request for mercy.

They were of a deeply religious nature, but superstition was a stranger to them.

Unlike most uncivilized peoples, the appearance of a comet, or an eclipse or an earthquake brought no terrors to them.

These they regarded as a part of natural phenomena, under the guidance of the "Beloved One," who gov-

erned all things, and bestowed upon his children all of the good things which their merits deserved. When that great philanthropist, General James Oglethorpe, about 1733, procured permission of King George to come to America and found a colony for the poor and oppressed people of England, who could not make a respectable living for themselves and families, he took care soon after settling at Savannah, Georgia, to seek out and make a league of friendship with that small and distant nation, the intrepid Chickasaws, though they lived nearly a thousand miles in the western wilderness near the Great Mississippi. The Chickasaws proved a bulwark of strength to Oglethorpe and his infant colony.

When General James Robertson, that conspicuous character in the settlement of Middle Tennessee, was striving to lay the foundation for his colony at the French Lick, he likewise sought out the intrepid Chickasaws and made a league of friendship with them; and but for their valor and fidelity his settlement would doubtless have been wiped from the face of the earth.

When after the Revolutionary war was over, and the Northwestern Indians beyond the Ohio and about the Great Lakes, were carrying fire and destruction to the outposts of civilization, and "Mad" Anthony Wayne was striving to raise an army to succor civilization in the wilderness, President George Washington, "first in war, first in peace and first in the hearts of his countrymen," appealed to the Chickasaws to aid the United States, to which they cheerfully responded.

It was a proud saying of the Chickasaws that they never raised the hatchet against the English speaking people; and if nobility of character and fidelity in the execution of every league of friendship and treaty ought to be rewarded, then there was nothing too good for the people and the Government of the United States to bestow upon the Chickasaws, but it has been said, and sometimes I think with some truth, that republics are ungrateful; at least such has been proven to be the case, so far as the Chickasaws are concerned.

Battle with the Chickasaws—

It should be borne in mind that the appearance of white men, clad in coats and other vestments of metal armor and mounted on horseback generally struck terror to the hearts of the Indians when they first looked upon white men, armored and mounted.

In Mexico, upon the first appearance of Cortez and his followers, the Indians thought the mounted men and the horses on which they rode were unearthly, gigantic monsters which had come to destroy them and their country and that resistance would be useless. But we have seen that the Chickasaws were not to be so easily frightened, and though their weapons were inferior to those of the Spaniards; and though the latter had upon them coats-of-mail and were mounted on horses which were likewise protected by armor, still we shall see the Chickasaws gladly matched their prowess with that of the Spaniards in three separate contests. They did not ask

the aid of other Indians, feeling themselves self sufficient for any emergency that might arise.

Three of the four narrators do not mention the name of the Cacique or Chief of the Chickasaws; but there is a sentence in Ranjel (p. 132) which though somewhat involved, gives the name of the principal Chief as Miculasa; while the Gentleman of Elvas gives the names of his two subordinate Chiefs as Alimamu and Niculasa.

It frequently happens that the narrators give different names both to persons and places; but this is not strange when we remember that they had no guide as to the spelling, and guessed at spelling from the sound of the words, as best they could.

Having taken possession, evidently against the will of the Chickasaws, De Soto sought to open up communications, seizing certain of the Indians and among them one that was much esteemed by Miculasa, the Chief, who came to see De Soto on January 3, 1541, being borne upon the shoulders of his warriors. Biedma says:

> "He gave us deer skins and little dogs (of which the Spaniards were fond). The people returned, and every day Indians came and went, bringing us many hares, and whatever else the country supplied."

According to Elvas when Chief Miculasa came to see De Soto,

> "He came, and offered him the service of his person, territories, and subjects; he said that he would cause two chiefs to visit him in peace. In

> a few days he returned with them, they bringing their Indians. They presented the Governor one hundred and fifty conies, with clothing of the country, such as shawls and skins.
>
> The name of one was Alimamu, of the other Niculasa."

I have quoted from Elvas hereinbefore that "so much grain was brought together as was needed for getting through the season."

Or, stated in one sentence, Chief Miculasa offered to De Soto his personal services, those of his people and territories, and actually supplied everything necessary for man and beast of the entire army, consisting of some two hundred and fifty men (Biedma, page 21) and at least one hundred head of horses, hogs, etc.

That this was a heavy burden to be suddenly placed upon an uncivilized people, does not admit of question, and at least shows that the Chickasaws were good livers.

When the expedition had fairly settled down, Chief Niculasa asked De Soto to aid him in the suppression of his vassal the Chief of Saquechuma (or Sacchuema-Ranjel), who had rebelled against Niculasa. De Soto, taking thirty cavalry and eighty infantry, went to the province said to be in rebellion and found the houses deserted, which were burned up. Ranjel states that thereupon peace was made, and does not hint of any trick or dissimulation on the part of the Indians. However, the Gentleman of Elvas states that the whole affair was a dissimulation on the part of Niculasa, who wished to separate the army into two parts so that it could be the more easily destroyed; but that, owing to the vigi-

lance of the governor, his men were at all times on guard and no opportunity was afforded to make the contemplated attack.

However this may be, it is certain that the governor was sending for the chief, and sending a horse upon which the chief was to ride in making his visits to dine with the governor, and we may all believe that the governor took occasion to make many fair and flattering speeches to the chief.

The Gentleman of Elvas gives a very clear and the best account of the causes which led to the sanguinary conflict between the army of De Soto and the Chickasaws, on March 4, 1841, and the results thereof; and I do not think I can do better than to quote from him, beginning at page 102, as follows:

> "The governor invited the caciques and some chiefs to dine with him, giving them pork to eat, which they so relished, although not used to it, that every night Indians would come up to some houses where the hogs slept, a cross-bow shot off from the camp, to kill and carry away what they could of them. Three were taken in the act; two the governor commanded to be slain with arrows, and the remaining one, his hands having been cut off, was sent to the cacique, who appeared grieved that they had given offense, and glad that they were punished. This chief was half a league from where the Christians were, in an open country, whither wandered off four of the cavalry, Francisco Osorio, Reynoso, a servant of the Marquis of Astorga, and two servants of the governor—the one, Ribera, his page, the other, Fuentes, his chamberlain. They took some skins and shawls from the Indians, who made great outcry in consequence and abandoned

their houses. When the governor heard of it, he ordered them to be apprehended, and condemned Osorio and Fuentes to death, as principals, and all of them to lose their goods. The friars, the priests and other principal personages solicited him to let Osorio live and moderate the sentence; but he would do so for no one. When about ordering them to be taken to the town-yard to be beheaded, some Indians arrived, sent by the chief to complain of them. Juan Ortiz, at the entreaty of Baltasar de Gallegos and others, changed their words, telling the governor, as from the cacique, that he had understood those Christians had been arrested on his account; that they were in no fault, having offended him in nothing, and that if he would do him a favour, to let them go free; then Ortiz said to the Indians, that the governor had the persons in custody, and would visit them with such punishment as should be an example to the rest. The prisoners were ordered to be released.

"So soon as March had come, the governor, having determined to leave Chicaca, asked two hundred tamemes of the cacique, who told him that he would confer with his chiefs. Tuesday, the eighth, he went where the cacique was, to ask for the carriers, and was told that he would send them the next day. When the governor saw the chief, he said to Luis de Moscoso that the Indians did not appear right to him; that a very careful watch should be kept that night, to which the field marshal paid little attention. At four o'clock in the morning the Indians fell upon them in four squadrons, from as many quarters, and directly as they were discovered, they beat a drum. With loud shouting, they came in such haste, that they entered the camp at the same moments with some scouts that had been out; of which, by the time those in the town were aware, half the houses were in flames. That night it had been the turn of three

horsemen to be of the watch—two of them of low degree, the least value of any in the camp, and the third a nephew of the governor, who had been deemed a brave man until now, when he showed himself as great a coward as either of the others; for they all fled, and the Indians, finding no resistance, came up and set fire to the place. They waited outside of the town for the Christians, behind the gates, as they should come out of the doors, having had no opportunity to put on their arms; and as they ran in all directions, bewildered by the noise, blinded by the smoke and the brightness of the flame, knowing not whither they were going, or were able to find their arms, or put saddles on their steeds, they saw the Indians who shot arrows at them. Those of the horses that could break their halters got away, and many were burned to death in the stalls.

"The confusion and rout were so great that each man fled by the way that first opened to him, there being none to oppose the Indians; but God, who chastiseth his own as he pleaseth, and in the greatest wants and perils hath them in his hand, shut the eyes of the Indians, so that they could not discern what they had done, and believed that the beasts running about loose were the cavalry gathering to fall upon them. The governor, with a soldier named Tapia, alone got mounted, and charging upon the Indians, he struck down the first of them he met with a blow of the lance, but went over with the saddle, because in the haste it had not been tightly drawn, and he fell. The men on foot, running to a thicket outside of town, came together there; the Indians imagining, as it was dark, that the horses were cavalry coming upon them, as has been stated, they fled, leaving only one dead, which was he the governor smote.

The town lay in cinders. A woman, with her husband, having left a house, went back to get

some pearls that had remained there; and when she would have come out again the fire had reached the door and she could not, neither could her husband assist her, so she was consumed. Three Christians came out of the fire in so bad plight, that one of them died in three days from that time, and the two others for a long while were carried in their pallets, on poles borne on the shoulders of Indians, for otherwise they could not have got along. There died in this affair eleven Christians, and fifty horses. One hundred of the swine remained, four hundred having been destroyed, from the conflagration of Mauilla.

"If, by good luck, anyone had been able to save a garment until then, it was there destroyed. Many remained naked, not having had time to catch up their skin dresses. In that place they suffered greatly from cold, the only relief being in large fires, and they passed the night long in turning, without the power to sleep; for as one side of a man would warm, the other would freeze. Some contrived mats of dried grass sewed together, one to be placed below and the other above them; many who laughed at this expedient were afterwards compelled to do likewise. The Christians were left so broken up, that what with the want of the saddles and arms which had been destroyed, had the Indians returned the second night, they might, with little effort, have been overpowered. They removed from that town to the one where the cacique was accustomed to live, because it was in the open field. In eight days' time they had constructed many saddles from the ash, and likewise lances, as good as those made in Biscay."

Garcilaso de la Vega gives substantially the same account as the Gentleman of Elvas, but adds some additional particulars, and among them that the Chickasaw

chief chose a dark and cloudy night when a north wind was blowing furiously, to make the attack.

That the chief divided his forces into three bands, so as to make the attack simultaneously in three several places, the chief leading in person the force which attacked in the center. He adds:

> "Immediately the air resounded with the blasts of conch shells, the rumbling of wooden drums, and the yells and war whoops of the savages, who rushed like demons to the assault. Many had lighted matches, like cords, made of a vegetable substance, which whirled in the air, would blaze up into a flame; others had arrows tipped with the same. These they hurled upon the houses, which being of reeds and straw, instantly took fire, and the wind blowing strongly, were soon wrapped in flames."

Ranjel says that the Indians "entered the camp in many detachments, beating drums as if it had been in Italy, and setting fire to the camp, they burned and captured fifty-nine horses and three of them they shot through the shoulders with arrows." He added: "If the Indians had known how to follow up their victory, this would have been the last day of the lives of the Christians of that army, and made an end of the demand for carriers."

We also learn from Garcilaso that the woman who was burned up was the wife of a worthy soldier, and that she was the only white woman that had accompanied the expedition from Spain. That she was a white woman is not stated by either of the other three narrators, and it will be seen that the sentence from Elvas in

reference to her death is obscure, but not in conflict with Garcilaso.

Her husband had left her behind when he rushed forth to fight, and she had escaped from the burning house, but returned to save some pearls; and was cut off by the flames from her second retreat and was found burned to death.

The loss of the Spaniards, according to Elvas, was eleven Christians and fifty horses; according to Ranjel, twelve Christians and fifty-nine horses; while Garcilaso says forty Spaniards fell in combat and fifty horses perished and many more wounded; that the darts had been skilfully aimed at the vital parts of the horses. One horse had two shafts through the heart, shot from different directions. Another horse and one of the heaviest in the army, was killed, sped by such a vigorous arm that the arrow had passed through both shoulders and four-finger's breadth beyond.

Biedma in his usual laconic style, says:

> "The Indians did us very great injury, killing fifty-seven horses, more than three hundred hogs, and thirteen or fourteen men; and it was a great, mysterious providence of God that, though we were not resisting them, nor giving them any cause to do so, they turned and fled; had they followed us up, not a man of all our number could have escaped. Directly we moved to a cottage about a mile off."

In the last conflict between the Spaniards and the Chickasaws, as will be seen in the next chapter, the number of Spaniards who then lost their lives in battle is

stated in a rather equivocal way; but it seems certain that at least fifteen died on the forward march, and I am inclined to the opinion that as many Spaniards perished in the last as did in the first battle.

The loss in the first battle of so much of De Soto's weapons, armor, horses, hogs, etc., was probably as great a weakening of the army as the loss of the lives of the Spaniards.

We must always bear in mind that our source of information comes from the Spaniards, who no doubt colored their accounts to their advantage, and doubtless to the disadvantage of the Chickasaws.

It will be noted that all four of the narratives state the loss of some three hundred head of hogs, which were greatly prized by De Soto. How he contrived to carry with his army so large a number of these slow-moving and easily-wearied animals through the wilderness, and to so keep them that they constantly multiplied, is one of the marvels of this extraordinary expedition. He saved enough, however, for stock, for after his death, May 21, 1542, his personal effects were sold at auction, and among these his hogs, which brought two hundred cruzados per head, to be paid at the end of the expedition, upon a division of the fruits thereof, or if none, then within one year. From that time forward most of the people raised hogs and ate freely of pork.

In an interesting article published by Mr. E. T. Winston of Pontotoc, in his paper THE ADVANCE, November

22, 1917, he reviews this episode in the travels of De Soto with respect to the loss of so many of his hogs, many of which escaped into the wilds and became the progenitors of multitudes of wild hogs found by the earliest settlers in Mississippi.

Mr. Winston felicitates the State of Mississippi as the place which first furnishing the time, the place and the occasion when "hog and hominy" first met, although the meeting was destined to give rise to the near destruction of the De Soto expedition, which furnished the hogs while the Indians furnished the hominy.

It is well known that maize, or Indian corn, was a gift of incalculable value from the Indians of the new world to civilization, more of that grain being now raised in the United States than any other cereal, the crop for 1917, being 3,247,512,000 bushels, valued at $4,871,-268,000 a sum so great as to stagger the imagination. Lye hominy, so much used throughout the South before the Civil War, and now put up in cans by large corporations for general distribution through the channels of trade and commerce, is a very wholesome and nourishing article of diet, a gift of the Indians to the world, which the Chickasaws called "Tom-fulla."

What Caused the Conflict—

It is perfectly evident from the account of the Spaniards that the attack by the Chickasaws upon the Spaniards was brought about by two causes which justly incensed the Indians.

In the first place the Spaniards had appropriated corn and other provisions belonging to the Indians worth probably ten times the value of all of the Spanish hogs. Doubtless the Indians thought that a fair exchange was no robbery; and conceding that some of these hogs were taken without permission, still it does seem a harsh and cruel punishment to have put two Indians to death therefor; and furthermore to have cut off the hands of a third one and sent him to his people. While I am well aware that the men at that day and time are not to be judged by the standards of the present, still the duplicity of Juan Ortiz turned the retributory sentence pronounced by De Soto on his fellows, who had robbed the Indians, into a perfect mockery of justice.

It is true that De Soto had decreed the same punishment on his own followers, that he had visited on the Indians for a like offense; but he was deceived, and the ends of justice defeated by the deception of Ortiz and his confederates; but we may be assured that his falsehoods did not deceive the ever vigilant and intelligent Chickasaws. The most unfortunate phase of the matter is that in all probability the Indians were never made aware of the deception practiced upon De Soto by his own followers.

In the next place the demand made by the Spaniards for porters was probably the immediate cause for the attack made by the Chickasaws upon the expedition. Nothing could escape the vigilance of the Chickasaws, for the smallness of the nation, surrounded by hostile neighbors, so much more numerous than themselves, made the

trite saying "eternal vigilance is the price of liberty," a part of the very warp and woof of their existence. I doubt not that they had a complete history of the treatment of the Spaniards towards the Indians before reaching their country; and if so they knew that if a tribe once furnished the desired porters, they were not only compelled to carry burdens all day, but were compelled to make camp, and when camp was made, it was their duty to feed the stock, do the cooking, and in short, do all menial work; they were secured by chains in order to prevent escape, and carried as virtual prisoners, either to death, or so far from their people that they could never return again to their beloved country.

Evidently the Chickasaws preferred death to such a fate and were ready to stake their all on an unequal contest. This they did not only in the manner set forth above, but in a few days they renewed the attack, but without success. De Soto was almost completely cast down by the terrible assaults of the fearless and intrepid Chickasaws. He had become convinced from appearances that the Indians were contemplating a battle, saying to his followers: "To night is an Indian night. I shall sleep armed and my horse saddled."

He charged Luis de Moscoso, Master of the Camp, that he should take extra precautions that night in regard to the sentinels, since they were to start on their journey next day. Moscoso put on the morning watch three of the most useless men, mounted on the poorest horses in the camp. For his gross negligence in this re-

gard De Soto deposed Moscoso, and appointed Baltazar de Gallagos in his place.

In the next chapter I will take up the line of march from the Chickasaw country to the place where De Soto discovered the Mississippi River, and then we will see that the Chickasaws made a third attempt to destroy the Spaniards. As that chapter will deal particularly with the place at which the great river was discovered and is intended as an answer to those who contend that it was discovered in Tunica County, Mississippi, and who also affect to reject the narrative of Garcilaso de la Vega, "the Inca," I will not in that chapter quote from or say anything upon the authority of Garcilaso, though I consider his narrative an extremely valuable contribution to our knowledge of what really occurred during the De Soto expedition.

However, as showing the bravery and indomitable spirit of the Chickasaws, Garcilaso tells at length of the complicated and well-built fort the Chickasaws had constructed near a rapid river, which we now call the Tallahatchie, and of the sanguinary conflict which there took place.

I select these two excerpts (p. 306) as showing the prowess and intrepidity of the Chickasaws:

> "At the first discharge, Diego de Castro, Luis Bravo, and Francisco de Figueroa, were brought to the ground, mortally wounded. *All three were pierced in the thigh, with arrows barbed with flint, for the savages,* having gained some experience during their warfare with the Spaniards, *always aimed at the thigh, which was never guarded.* The Span-

iards, seeing their companions fall, shouted to one another to rush in, and leave the Indians no time to gall them with their arrows. They charged furiously, and drove the enemy before them, to the very portals of the fortress.

"While Jaun de Anasco and Andres de Vasconcelos attacked the savages on the flank, De Soto with twenty horses, charged upon the other. As the governor was spurring onward, an arrow struck him upon his casque with such force that it rebounded a pike's length in the air, and De Soto confessed afterwards that it made his eyes flash fire. Pressed by the united shock of horse and foot, the Indians made for the entrance of the fort, but these were so narrow that a great number were slaughtered without the walls. The Spaniards rushed in, pell-mell, with them. * * *

One of the savages who had escaped, desirous of showing his skill with the bow and arrow, separated himself from his companions, and shouted to the Spaniards, giving them to understand, by signs and words, that he challenged any archer to come out and have a shot with him, to prove which was the better marksman. Upon this, Juan de Salinas, a brave Austrian (Asturian?) hidalgo, who with some companions had sheltered himself among trees from the arrows, stepped forth, and walking down to the bank of the river, took his stand opposite to the Indian. One of his companions called to him to wait until he should come to guard him with his shield; but Salinas refused to take any advantage of his enemy. He placed an arrow in his cross-bow, while the Indian also selected one from his quiver, and both drew at the same moment.

The dart of Juan de Salinas took effect, and pierced the Indian's breast. He would have fallen, but was received in the arms of his companions, who bore him away, more dead than alive. The Indian's arrow pierced the Spaniard in the nape of the neck.

and remained crossed in the wound. Salinas returned with it in this state to his comrades, well pleased with his success.

The comrades of the fallen Indian allowed him to depart without molestation, as the challenge had been man to man."

The bravery thus displayed, not only by the Chickasaws as a nation, but by the Chickasaw warrior, who defiantly challenged any archer of the De Soto army to single combat, commands the admiration of all who respect valor, and those who willingly offer their lives upon the altar of their country, that their countrymen may enjoy the priceless privilege of freedom.

Can any Mississippian, Tennessean, Kentuckian or Alabamian whose home once lay within the domains of that splendid territory over which the Chickasaws were the acknowledged Overlords, read the simple story left by the Spaniards of the fight for liberty made by the Chickasaws, and not be thrilled with emotions of admiration for those who first occupied their homes?

Claiborne, the greatest of Mississippi historians, after giving an account of the battles of the Chickasaws with the Spaniards for freedom, eloquently concludes:

"History records no bolder enterprise. A fortified camp, defended by the best soldiers of Europe armed with what the Indians called thunder and lightning, attacked by naked savages, with bows and war clubs: All honor to this noble race of warriors—these native Mississippians who subsequently, in defense of their homes and fireside, defeated and disgraced three French Armies, sent to subdue them. And may this ever be the fate of the invader of the territory of a free people."

CHAPTER IV.

TOPOGRAPHY OF THE COUNTRY BETWEEN THE CHICKASAW COUNTRY AND CHICKASAW BLUFFS.

On February 18, 1917, Dr. Dunbar Rowland, Director of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, published a paper in the Commercial Appeal, the purpose of which was to show that De Soto discovered the Mississippi River in Tunica County, Mississippi, at a point he cannot locate; and it may be added, nor can any one else.

Soon thereafter Judge J. P. Young, author of the History of Memphis, and other works, replied to Dr. Rowland in a very vigorous manner, insisting that De Soto discovered the great river at the fourth Chickasaw Bluff, named after that intrepid and splendid nation, the Chickasaws, these Bluffs being their entrepot or landing, from which, on the bosom of the father of waters they traveled in their water-craft to the most northernmost parts of their princely domains, which stretched up the Mississippi, then up the Ohio beyond the mouth of the Tennessee to the dividing ridge between it and the Cumberland river, in what is now the state of Kentucky. Memphis is built on the fourth Chickasaw Bluff, and if Judge Young is correct, it was here that the great river was first discovered in May, 1541.

Centenary Vol. II, Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society, so ably edited by Dr. Rowland, has just come to hand, and contains the two papers referred

to, together with a second paper by Dr. Rowland in reply to Judge Young.

These papers having thus been put in permanent form, the purpose of this paper is to meet Dr. Rowland on his favorite arena, as disclosed in his last paper, and to show beyond a reasonable doubt that De Soto discovered the Mississippi, the longest river in the world, at the point whereon Memphis is now situated.

Like Judge Young, from childhood to young manhood I lived in Mississippi, in De Soto County, fifteen miles southeast of Memphis, and love that State; but the question is at what point was the river discovered, and this question must be answered according to the facts as they were, and not as we would have them to be.

Dr. Rowland Has Shifted the Bulwark of His Defense—

The discussion between the two eminent authors as disclosed in the papers, is pitched on high ground as become men of their character, and I would not have it supposed that in what I may say, I desire in any way to make invidious criticisms, for my only purpose is to throw light on this most interesting question, and contribute, if I can, to its proper solution.

That Dr. Rowland has shifted the main bulwark of the defense of his theory I think is quite plain, for in his first paper on page 145 of the work referred to, he says:

> "I freely admit in the outset that the claim of Memphis as the place where the great river was discovered has been accepted *by some Memphians,* but that acceptance has, no doubt, been based on the narrative of Garcilaso de la Vega, 'the Inca,' which careful and complete investigation has shown to be unreliable, and not in accord with the narrative of the facts as given in all contemporary accounts."

Further on I will challenge this conclusion as to the "Inca." But for the present mark that he says the claim of Memphis has been accepted *"by some Memphians,"* the plain implication being that only *"some Memphians"* claim that the river was discovered here, and that the claim has no other support.

Judge Young met this claim of Dr. Rowland and utterly destroyed it, by showing that many historians, through a series of many years had designated the fourth Chickasaw Bluff as the place where De Soto discovered the Mississippi. What is of prime importance is that among these authors cited by Judge Young, and from whom he quoted, was Bancroft, whose reputation as an accurate and accomplished historian is nation-wide, and I think it may be said he has international reputation, and greater than that of all the historians cited by Dr. Rowland, if it were possible to combine their several reputations in one.

And, moreover, Judge Young also quotes from J. F. H. Claiborne, in "Mississippi as a State and Territory," easily the most noted of all Mississippi historians, for Claiborne likewise supports the claim that the river was discovered where Memphis now stands.

Evidently the idea that the claim of Memphis has been accepted only "by some Memphians" was exploded.

In his second paper (p. 159) Dr. Rowland says that the most reliable source of information is found in original records. Next in importance, he insists, comes the topography and geology of the country through which the expedition passed. To these views I give my hearty assent, and upon this arena which Dr. Rowland has thus chosen, I wish to meet him.

His statement that the geology of the country is the same is entirely correct; but his further statement that the topography is the same, is only partially correct, for the Indian villages and forests are not only gone, but a large part of the hills on the route have been so gullied and gutted by rains and the elements since the country was denuded of its forests, the valleys so filled with sand, and the rivers and creeks so choked up and dwindled away, as to present only a faint topographical resemblance to the time of De Soto, now (1919) 378 years ago.

The late Ab Myers, of Byhalia, Mississippi, speaking to me on this subject many years ago, said that he had all the works of De Tocqueville, the noted French statesman and writer, and that De Tocqueville in his travels through that part of the state, noticing the great quantities of sand in the soil, predicted that in 100 years after the settlement of the country, it would become a howling wilderness. It must be admitted that the prophecy has been to some extent fulfilled, but quite enough remains for the present discussion.

In a recent letter to me by W. T. Ross, cashier of the Holly Springs Bank, and who has been connected therewith for forty years, he says:

> "Holly Springs was named for the beautiful spring surrounded by holly trees, but the sand has covered up the spring, and not a holly tree is to be seen. My father told me that when he came here in 1836, the spring was about 30 feet wide and 10 feet deep, and would swim a horse. This spring formed a bold creek that emptied into Tallaloosa, southwest of the town."

When Mr. Ross was a lad the spring was still running pretty strong. On July 21, 1918, he walked with me over and through back yards to show me the spot where this beautiful spring once flowed, not a vestige of it or its beautiful trees being left, its site being in what appeared to be a back yard for cattle!

How Language Should Be Interpreted—

We all know that there is no direct communication between the minds of men, and that our thoughts, conceptions and ideas must usually be conveyed by words, written or spoken. The frailty of human speech or written language to correctly convey what we wish others to know has often been lamented, and we are frequently forced to resort to rules of interpretation. Interpretation may be defined as the art of finding out the true sense of any set of words; that is, the sense which their author intended to convey. In order to do this we must view the situation of the party who wrote the words as well as all his surroundings, so as to place ourselves in

the position which he occupied. Applying the principle to the subject of this discussion we must inquire what was the topography of the county through which the writers had to pass; what roads or trails, if any, could be made available, and their respective difficulties, and generally to put ourselves in their places so as to ascertain the true meaning of the language used. This leads us to a consideration of the topography of the country, and what was the most available route to pursue for the objects of the expedition. Manifestly, likewise, all that the narrators say must be considered and construed together, and not quoted in part, much less garbled, as I think has been done.

In Lieber's Hermeneutics, or the principles of interpretation and construction (p. 71), it is said:

> "In the first place it must begin with what is likewise the first rule of criticism.
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> We must convince ourselves that the text be genuine, that is, that it has proceeded from the utterer from which it purports to have proceeded, or from whom others assert it to have proceeded; or that it belongs to that period at which it is maintained that it originated. This is a rule of paramount importance in all departments, and not the least so in politics, whether it refer to documents issued by the highest authority, or to reports of speeches, or to conversational sayings of a political character."

The correctness of these principles are so obvious that it would seem unnecessary to appeal thereto; nevertheless we will see further on, a flagrant violation of the foregoing elementary and paramount rule, in that the

texts of the narratives have been misquoted and garbled to a degree that is surprising. We need not impute any improper motive, and indeed may assume that everything has been written in the utmost good faith; nevertheless the question remains as to what is the true interpretation of the language used by the various narrators; and fidelity in strictly quoting the exact language as written lies at the very threshold of this discussion, and can not be evaded if we would rather pursue another course.

The Trails of the Chickasaw Indians—

In the celebrated conference between the Chickasaw, Creek and Cherokee Indians at Nashville in 1792, and Governor Blount, James Robertson and others, Piomingo, the great Chickasaw Chief, thus described the boundaries of their lands:

> "I will describe the boundaries of our lands. It begins on the Ohio at the ridge which divides the waters of Tennessee and Cumberland, and extends with the ridge, eastwardly, as far as the most eastern waters of Elk River; thence across the Tennessee, and a neck of land, to Tenchacunda Creek, a southern branch of the Tennessee, and up the same to its source; thence to the waters of the Tombigby; that is, to the west fork of Long Leaf Pine Creek, and down it to the line of the Chickasaws and Choctaws, a little below the trading road."

In 1794, President George Washington gave to the Chickasaws a certificate confirming to them their right to the territory so described by Piomingo.

The expression often used with respect to the condition of this country at the time of its discovery, as being a pathless wilderness, has in it scarcely a vestige of truth. The trails or traces of the Indians extended hundreds of miles in all directions and they criss-crossed each other over the whole continent, and over these the Indians constantly traveled on continuous trips thousands of miles. The Chickasaws were great travelers, and thought nothing of going to the far west, over their trails to Mobile on the Gulf, to Savannah and Charleston on the Atlantic and to the Great Lakes in the far North, where they waged furious warfare with the Iroquois.

The Indians, and the Chickasaws in particular, were pastmasters in all woodcraft and knew the topography of the country and all its conditions almost by instinct; and as a general rule what may be termed their principal trails or highways ran along the crest of ridges in such manner as not only to avoid crossing water courses, but of passing over stony places or through thick scrub and briars or dense timber, so as to protect their footgear, their clothing and their flesh as well.

Their trails or traces were far superior to any the white man could locate, and the early use by white pioneers of these Indian trails was a constant source of friction, for the Indians resented that use. As soon as state governments were organized roads were laid out over these traces; and the United States government made these trails available. Thus, the Chickasaws had a trail leading from about where Natchez, Mississippi, now is on to the Cumberland River where Nashville is now

situated, and the trail led thence onward to the Atlantic seaboard, over which the Chickasaws traveled. It became very necessary both for military and civil purposes to have a road over which wagons could pass from the growing settlement on the Cumberland to the settlement at Natchez on the Mississippi, and after long negotiations and much difficulty, the United States finally induced the Chickasaws, at the Chickasaw Bluffs, to enter into the treaty of October 26, 1801, by which the Chickasaws granted to the President of the United States, permission

> "to lay out, open and make a convenient wagon road through their lands between the settlement of Mero District in the State of Tennessee, and those of Natchez in the Mississippi Territory, in such way and manner as he may deem proper; and the same shall be a highway for the United States and the Chickasaws."

The ferries crossing all streams were reserved by the Indians as these at that time were valuable.

General Andrew Jackson laid out the road, following the Indian trail, which remained in use until superseded by the advent of railroads and steamboats.

This celebrated Natchez trail was crossed by the no less important trail to the Chickasaws than that commencing at the Chickasaw Bluffs on the Mississippi River, and running thence southwardly to the Gulf coast where Mobile, Alabama, now is, and this great Chickasaw highway will next be noticed.

If you look into the history of James Adair, published in London in 1775, and their best early historian,

or nearly any book of reference, you will see it stated that the Chickasaws were seated in North Mississippi near where Pontotoc now is, 160 miles from the Mississippi River, some of them saying, from the river at the *Chickasaw Bluffs*. In a direct line it is not 100 miles from Memphis to Pontotoc, and I was puzzled for some time to understand how the Indian trail could be 160 miles long between those points.

The explanation is that the old chroniclers in giving the distance computed it according to the great trail of the Chickasaws, which could be used at all seasons of the year, and of course along high ground and the crest of a ridge nearly all the way. Thus, by leaving the Chickasaw Bluff and crossing Wolf River near Memphis at Raleigh, where the high land comes down in an abrupt precipice to the water, or even nearer Memphis, you can travel almost dry shod to Hardeman County near Bolivar; and thence taking the crest of the well known Pontotoc ridge southward you will pass over the highest ground in all Mississippi, about 700 feet above the sea, lying in Tippah County; and thence on to Pontotoc, and during all this journey you will scarcely cross a stream, a distance of about 160 miles.

In Vol. I Centenary Series (p. 467), George J. Leftwich has an interesting article entitled "Some Main Traveled Roads, Including Cross-sections of Natchez Trace"; and speaking of the Chickasaw highway trail from the Chickasaw Bluffs to their home in North Mississippi, and leading onward to the Gulf of Mexico at Mobile, he says:

> "On the attached map is plainly marked out also the Bolivar Indian trail, which ran from Memphis to Mobile, by way of the Chickasaw towns in Lee County, and down the Tombigbee River to St. Stevens and Mobile; from the Chickasaw towns near Tupelo, it passed northwest by Ripley, by Bolivar, Tennessee, on to the Chickasaw Bluffs. The Bolivar trail was the route of travel followed by the Indians and pioneers, leading from the Tombigbee country by way of Bolivar to Fort Adams (now Memphis) on the Mississippi; and afforded access for the Chickasaws and Choctaws to West Tennessee, which was known as the common hunting ground for the Indians who lived in Kentucky on the north, and the Chickasaws and Choctaws on the South. Williams, in his 'Old Times in West Tennessee,' says that this road was pursued circuitously in order to avoid the crossing of the streams so numerous in the country farther south, which largely trend westward towards the Holly Springs country, which were harder to cross; Indians always avoid as much as possible water courses" (see p. 467).

Note that it is said the waters trend westward towards the Holly Springs country, and this is correct, for the headwaters of both the Tallahatchie and Coldwater rivers commence in the Tippah highlands. It should also be noted that the highlands of Tippah, the highest in the state, extend an elbow or a spur down into Marshall County, embracing Holly Springs, and over this high elbow or spur and across adjacent streams and their bottoms the Chickasaw short-cut, or dry weather trail ran, this trail running in almost a straight northwest direction from the seat of the Chickasaws in what is now Pontotoc County to the fourth Chickasaw Bluff,

the entrepot of that Nation. Here a neck of high land projects itself to the edge of the river, making a high precipitous bluff, the high land stretching back in the shape of a fan, making the bluffs an ideal place for a permanent landing of rare value to the Indians, and a place whereon to build a great city; hence the subsequent location of Memphis here, often called the Bluff City.

These short cut trails were indispensable to the Indians, for the news of an invasion or other matter of great importance could only be carried by a messenger running on foot, and the Chickasaws were celebrated in this respect. Thus, Adair tells of a young Chickasaw, who, on an emergency, and being pursued, ran from where Mobile, Alabama, is now located (a distance of 300 computed miles) in 42 hours; whereas Adair says he could scarcely make the same trip in 140 hours, though riding a very superior saddle horse. This Indian carried no provisions, depending upon such herbs as he could snatch up on the way for sustenance, and yet not allowing him a moment to eat or to sleep, he traveled night and day at an average rate of over seven miles an hour for forty-two consecutive hours!

When D'Artaguette came from Canada down the Mississippi in 1736, with his French and Indian army, for the avowed purpose of joining Bienville's army coming from the South to annihilate the Chickasaws, he landed his army at the Chickasaw Bluffs, and proceeded thence to the seat of the Chickasaws in North Mississippi, where both armies suffered an inglorious defeat at the hands of the invincible Chickasaws.

In the discussion of any subject it is well to have correct data as a foundation on which to proceed; and as this has been somewhat difficult to obtain with respect to the topography of the country in question, I will set it down for the benefit of those who may prefer accuracy to mere speculation or rhetoric.

In a letter to me of date October 3, 1918, Dr. E. N. Lowe, the efficient geologist of Mississippi, says:

"1. The annual rainfall in the latitude of Holly Springs is 50 inches, pretty evenly distributed over the region of Marshall and adjacent hill counties.

2. From my own measurements the highest point in Mississippi is at Blue Mountain, the Bald Knob, a few hundred yards northeast of Mississippi Heights School, rising to 690 feet above sea level. I have been informed that a point near Iuka rises to more than 700 feet, and I am inclined to believe this, though I do not know that it is true. Dr. F. T. Carmack of Iuka claims to have seen the altitude taken by government engineers.

3. The highlands about Holly Springs seems to be independent of the Tippah highlands, separated from that ridge at the nearest point by about 20 miles of lower intervening regions.

4. Altitude of railroad station at Holly Springs is 602 feet; a mile south of the station the railroad track rises considerably higher."

To the same effect I received a letter from Dr. W. T. Lowrey, the well known president of Blue Mountain College, which was founded by General M. P. Lowrey,

the father of W. T. Lowrey, in 1873. The large hill called Blue Mountain acquired that name in the remote past, and long before the college was located there. Dr. Lowrey says he was told that the name originated with the young people of Ripley before the Civil War, when they drove through the country from Ripley to visit Colonel Brougher's family, who lived in a palatial residence which was located where the main dormitory of Blue Mountain College is now situated, commanding a fine view of the surrounding country.

It is almost needless to add that the name Blue Mountain originated from the beautiful blue mountainous view here afforded. As might be expected, the adjacent country abounds in many bold springs of clear freestone, wholesome water, making the country very attractive and healthful, and an ideal location for an educational institution.

C. C. Pashby, for many years was connected with the engineer's office of Memphis, and for sometime has been the city clerk, and is a man of accurate information, and in a recent letter he says:

> "Replying to your inquiries concerning the altitude of Memphis above the river and above the gulf, annual rainfall, etc.:
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> I beg to advise that the following points are given, together with their elevation above the zero point on the river gauge, and the elevation above the mean level of the Gulf of Mexico:

	Above Zero River Gage.	Above Gulf Mexico.
Madison and Front	88	270
Jackson Mounds (De Soto Pk)	102	284
Bellevue & K. C. Junction	136	318
Mississippi & Trigg	138	320
Tri-State Fair	134	316
S. W. Corner Overton Park	100	282

The Zero gage referred to is the lowest point where the river is supposed to have reached, at a date back in the eighteen-seventies; though I have heard that it went some two or three feet lower since then.

I have consulted some of the United States Reports in an effort to find the elevation of Holly Springs, but have been unable to do so. However, I did learn that the elevation of

Tupelo is	279 feet;
Jackson, Tenn.	396 feet;
Grand Junction	582 feet.

The rainfall in this locality varies from about 33 inches to a record of something like 72 inches with an average of about 45."

It will be noted that there are considerable differences in the altitude of nearby places in Memphis, a fact to which I will refer further on, when I will show that the criticism of Prof. Lewis as to statements made by Garcilaso de la Vega with reference to the topography of the country where De Soto discovered the Mississippi, has no foundation upon which to rest.

But to return to a consideration of the Chickasaw country, we find that the Chickasaws were located on the Pontotoc ridge, which increased in altitude going north

reaching its highest point in the Tippah highlands and extending still further northward into Tennessee. This high land or ridge divides the waters flowing into the Mississippi from those flowing into the Gulf of Mexico; or it may be termed the height of land between these two great water sheds.

All of the country to the west of this height of land quite uniformly slopes downward toward the Mississippi River; and as might be supposed the streams flow westward, those in Mississippi taking a trend southward as they approach the river.

We thus have these natural conditions: a warm climate; a heavy annual rainfall, and a gradually descending water shed, the soil of which has in it much sand, some of it impalpably fine, nevertheless sand. The rain and sunshine operating upon this country as the seasons succeed each other could not fail to wear down the country into a broken appearance, with almost innumerable small streams and many more or less considerable streams, and with very rich alluvial bottoms. The sandy soil washing down with leaves and vegetable matter gradually extended these bottoms and from this rich soil spring giant white oaks, red oaks and many other oaks, besides immense gums, hickories, ash, poplar, cypress and many other varieties of the finest timber to be found in any country.

This was precisely the character of country over which De Soto passed.

The Short-Cut Trail, or Pigeon Roost Road—

Having referred to the long trail which could be used to the best advantage at all seasons of the year and in all kinds of weather, I will now call attention to what for a better name I will call the short-cut trail, which was the shortest route or way between the Chickasaw's home in North Mississippi, and the Chickasaw Bluffs.

Under the Chickasaw treaties of 1832 and 1834, all of the Chickasaw cession was laid off into sections, and the roads in Mississippi run on section lines, except where the roads of the white man adopted the Indian trails, and the Pigeon Roost Road falls into the excepted class, because it follows the ancient Chickasaw trail. It will now be described.

This road was laid out by the Shelby County Court in 1828, when there was scarcely a handful of people in the then village of Memphis, and it ran along the Chickasaw short-trail or trace. The description of the road, as officially laid off, commences where Adams Street intersects Bayou Gayoso, the then corporate limits of the village, and after proceeding in a southeasterly direction with various calls and courses, it proceeds thus: "Thence with said line of blaze bearing southeastwardly to the *old Chickasaw trace on top of a ridge;* thence with the said trace occasionally straightening the same on good ground, to the northeast side of a lagoon in the bottom (the lagoon evidently being in Nonconnah bottom), thence with a line of chops and blazes to the creek (evidently Nonconnah) a short distance below the ford on the old trace; thence up the bank of the

creek to the old trace, and with it cutting across some lands as above to where the same crosses the State Line."

By actual measurements recently made, Nonconnah bottom begins eight miles from Second and Adams Streets, opposite the Court House in Memphis, passing along the old Chickasaw trail, as near as that can be now traveled in the city, and then along the line of the present Pigeon Roost Road. Nonconnah is a considerable creek, and was much larger before the country was settled. In high water even at this day, the creek is often a mile wide and anciently its bottom was filled with lagoons and cypress brakes, and difficult to cross except under most favorable conditions. To my knowledge during the Civil War the four long bridges over the sloughs, and the one over the main stream, were down, at least the most of them were, and a ferry was maintained across the main stream over which I often passed. In the winter the road became so out of repair that for days and days no vehicle could pass over it. Nonconnah bottom was then infested by robbers, and three Federal soldiers were court-martialed and shot for committing rape in that dreaded bottom, my father Dr. Franklin J. Malone, being a witness at the trial in Memphis. My father died January 24, 1873, and I rode from Memphis to the old home just across the line in De Soto County on horseback, as no vehicles were then passing over the road, it being difficult to pass on horseback, that winter being an exceptionally bad one.

On July 21, 1918, I rode in my auto from Memphis to Holly Springs, a distance of 47.9 miles, carefully noting the water courses crossed by the Pigeon Roost Road, and I do not think that it can be surpassed for its many windings, turnings and constant changes of courses, thus demonstrating its Indian origin.

Leaving the Court House at Memphis, Nonconnah bottom was reached at eight miles, after descending Brown's hill, formerly rising abruptly to high land, and this high land extends to Memphis. The bottom is a little over one mile wide, and emerging from this bottom the land is not high for some miles, but low, and formerly swampy. This low level land may be designated according to local description, as second bottom lands, and extends from the true or low bottom lands, about two miles, passing through the village of Oakville (formerly called Shakerag), and to a small creek or large branch with a good sized bottom, and then the road goes up on rolling land. Further on Ten-Mile branch is crossed, its name implying its distance from Memphis. Capleville is reached at thirteen miles, and by it, or rather where it now stands, there flowed in 1859, and for years thereafter to my knowledge, a beautiful creek with delightful fish in it. Today what is left of it forms a big ditch not made by nature, but by the hand of man, about one-eighth of a mile to the north, in which you may sometimes see a muddy conglomerate to which the phrase may be applied, "as dull as ditch water." The fate of this stream on the upper waters of which, three miles distant, in my boyhood days I

swam and sported, catching beautiful fish, is the common fate of all the streams through this section of the country. A few hundred yards beyond Capleville another creek is crossed.

I will now give the small creeks and distances crossed from Memphis to Holly Springs from this point.

At the State Line, 15.5 miles; 17.6 miles; 18.3 miles (Olive Branch passed); 20.8 miles; 23.8 miles (at Miller's); 25.6 miles (this is Coldwater River, with a bottom one mile wide); 29.3 miles (Byhalia passed, 30.1), and at 30.9 miles (Byhalia Creek), and 31.7 miles (Byhalia Creek again crossed, at least this was the name given me); 34 miles; 34.7 miles, good sized creek near Victoria (passing Red Banks at 39 miles); 40.4 miles; 41.8 miles; 42.8 miles (good size); 43.7 miles (good size); thence to Holly Springs, 47.9 miles, from the point of beginning, which was opposite the Court House in Memphis.

I need scarcely add that every stream crossed has its bottom more or less wide, according to its size, and the abruptness of the hills rising from its bosom.

These bottoms were veritable wildernesses to anyone compelled to cross them before the country was settled up.

One of the most notable features of the landscape that could not fail to attract the attention of any observant person, was the beautiful view afforded about two miles from Holly Springs, approaching that city on the Pigeon Roost Road from the northwest. The road leads up to the brow of a long hill, and the outlines of the city

can be faintly seen in the distance, and apparently with a mountainous background, and with intervening lowlands between the observer and the city. Or, expressed in other words, the city was apparently silhouetted upon the horizon, with a mountainous background; a very pleasing view to those who live in a comparatively flat country. This feature of the landscape, will be found to be very important when we come to carefully consider the descriptions given by the various narratives of the country over which De Soto marched his army.

It is also an undeniable fact that upon the ridges and little plateaus throughout this region, there were numerous depressions, locally called ponds, which are well described in the words of the Gentleman of Elvas, as "pondy places," "basins or lakes." Sometimes these pondy places covered say only an acre, with aquatic plants and shrubs in them, drying up in midsummer; while others were deeper, and covered some acres, were clear of all trees or shrubs and could be designated as lakes; and on these, numerous ducks and other wild fowl found feeding places, and they never dried up. The river and larger bottoms were literally covered with lagoons, and what are locally called cypress brakes, many of them containing deep water throughout the year, having soft mud bottoms and over which it was extremely difficult to pass.

In reference to the cypress brakes, as they are locally called, it may be stated that they abounded in all the the bottoms similar to that of Nonconnah, and deserve further notice. There are in the old world, as well as

in America, many species of cypress, but the discovery in the Southern states of this country of what is called "Swamp Cypress," or "Bald Cypress," was a distinct surprise to botanists and naturalists in general. It is one of the loftiest trees, grows to a height of 170 feet, and of such massive trunks as to be sometimes from ten to fifteen feet in diameter, and usually grows in or near water, or on low land subject to frequent inundations. More than one hundred years ago Bartram said of it:

> "This cypress is in the first order of North American trees. Its majestic stature is surprising. On approaching we are struck with a kind of awe at beholding the stateliness of its trunk, lifting its cumbrous top towards the sky and casting a wide shadow on the ground, as a dark, intervening cloud, which from time to time excludes the rays of the sun. The delicacy of its color and the texture of its leaves exceed everything in vegetation."

It is said to be remarkable in that it is little affected by the dryness or excessive moisture in the atmosphere, for on the same tree different forms of branches and foliage will sometimes be found to exist, which are capable of either aiding or preventing the escape of moisture.

Another remarkable thing about this Southern cypress, is a large conical excrescence which rises from the roots of the tree, called cypress knees, the cause or reason for their growth being unknown, and as to which much speculation has been indulged. They are hollow, and where the tree grows in water the knees rise above

the surface, there sometimes being as many as one hundred under a tree. Where the tree grows on land not submerged, there are no knees. Some cypress brakes in large bottoms were miles long and wide; and it can be readily seen that where the ground was submerged and with knees interspersed, it would form an almost impassable barrier.

The wood of this cypress was and is extremely valuable for shingles, which last for forty years, besides, it was much used for fencing, interior paneling for doors, windows, etc., hence it was one of the first giants of the forest to fall under the woodman's ax, and now, alas, they have nearly disappeared from the bottoms of our upland country.

There is one lone sentinel, like a spectre of the past, growing out of the north bank of Nonconnah, a few inches from the west side of the iron bridge on the Pigeon Roost Road, and evidently spared because the bridge would lodge against it, in case it should be moved by a great flood. It is a double or twin tree, and while not one of the giants of its tribe, still gives some faint idea of what those monarchs of the forest were like.

A few feet below this same bridge there will also be seen a miniature island in midstream, on which small trees are growing. The passing throng would never suppose that as late as during the Civil War there was not only no island there, but in its place there was a wide expanse of water on whose bosom a ferry boat crossed and recrossed, carrying wagons, buggies, horses, men and everything that traveled, for which the trav-

eling public were compelled to pay exorbitant ferriage fees. Now a man could jump from one side of the creek to the other side almost, without wetting his feet; and still Dr. Rowland thinks the topography of the country is the same. I can scarcely ever cross the bridge referred to without casting a glance at the lone tree-sentinel and the little miniature island; and mute witnesses though they be, yet to me they speak in trumpet tones of the mutability of all worldly things, and of the infinite future to which we are fleeing with such incredible swiftness that even the scenes of our childhood days seem like phantoms of the past!

Some time since application was made to convert all of Nonconnah and its bottoms into a drainage district, and some technicality has delayed the proceeding; but, sooner or later, the Gordian knot will be cut, and a dull ditch will be all that is left of the majestic stream, once known as Nonconnah.

In the fall of 1917, and previous thereto, I rode in an auto from Holly Springs in the main southeastward direction, towards Pontotoc, and crossed Chewalla Creek (quite a stream), the main branch of Tippah Creek, sometimes called Tippah River, and crossing to the southwest of the Frisco road at Potts Camp, we then crossed another affluent of Tippah; these considerable creek bottoms having the main characteristics of the country from Holly Springs to Memphis, and in addition, the country had a more mountainous and picturesque appearance, owing to the many hills rising abruptly from the bottoms.

Since the foregoing was written, viz., on December 1, 1918, again I went over the same road; C. H. Curd, long time editor of the Holly Springs Reporter, being a member of the party.

After we had crossed the Kansas City or Frisco Railroad at Potts Camp, going southwest, and then crossed quite considerable creek bottoms, we ascended some high hills, rising abruptly from the bottom land.

After going some two to three miles further, the ground was still higher, and Mr. Curd pointed out to us the top of a distant ridge, which he said was fourteen miles from us, and was the site of Holly Springs.

He went with us to a high hill one mile west of Holly Springs, locally called Rocky Mountain, because of its height and the presence on its top of large sand stones, some ten feet in length and nearly as wide, a very unusual geologic feature for that section.

Pigeon Roost Creek and the Pigeons—

The names, Pigeon Roost Road, and Pigeon Roost Creek carry with them a meaning with respect to the country which furnished these names, if we but consider attentively those words. At the risk of being charged with a digression, I will linger to consider these names and what they imply; especially as this digression will involve characteristics of the Chickasaw country, now our country; for it is unfortunately true that we give more attention to the histories, appearances and stories of foreign countries, than to that of our own, it matters not

how interesting our own country, past and present may be.

The disappearance of the vast hosts of wild pigeons, whose flights in the heavens once almost obscured the light of the sun at noon, has proven one of the mysteries of nature.

Their sudden disappearance from the face of the earth in modern times remains an unsolved problem. I remember as a small boy to have seen in 1859 innumerable numbers of these wild pigeons in flight, and they appeared to be fond of lighting in the large oak trees, especially white oaks, and I was told that they were feeding upon acorns. They chose the largest and strongest trees for a roost, because their great weight would tear down and strip the strongest monarchs of the forest.

In Lincecum's autobiography already referred to, he describes the great destruction to the timber in the Choctaw country, just south of the Chickasaw country, where ever the pigeons had a roost. As like causes produce like results, the immensity of these pigeon roosts and the consequent destruction produced thereby at one place furnishes a description where other roosts took place; and I will here insert excerpts from famous nature writers, the accuracy of whose observations cannot be doubted:

> "The associated numbers of wild pigeons, the numerous flocks which compose the general swarm, are without any other parallel in the history of the feathered race; they can indeed alone be compared to the finny shoals of herrings, which, descending from the Arctic regions, discolor and fill the ocean

to the extent of mighty kingdoms. * * * The approach of the mighty feathered army with a loud rushing roar and a stirring breeze, attended by a sudden darkness, might be mistaken for a fearful tornado about to overwhelm the face of Nature. For several hours together the vast host, extending some miles in breadth, still continues to pass in flocks, without diminution. The whole air is filled with birds; * * * they shut out the light as if it were an eclipse. At the approach of the hawk their sublime and beautiful aerial evolutions are disturbed like a ruffling squall extending over the placid ocean; as a thundering torrent they rush together in a concentrating mass, and heaving in undulating and glittering sweeps towards the earth, at length again proceed in lofty meanders like the rushing of a mighty animated river. * * *

In the Atlantic States, where the flocks are less abundant, the gun, decoy, and net are put in operation against the devoted throng. Twenty or even thirty dozen have been caught at a single sweep of the net. Wagonloads of them are poured into market, where they are sometimes sold for no more than a cent apiece. * * * The Honorable T. H. Perkins remarks that about the year 1798, while he was passing through New Jersey, near Newark, the flocks continued to pass for at least two hours without cessation; and he learned from the neighboring inhabitants that in descending upon a large pond to drink, those in the rear, alighting on the backs of the first that arrived (in the usual order of their movements on land to feed), pressed them beneath the surface, so that tens of thousands were thus drowned. They were likewise killed in great numbers at the roosts with clubs." Nuttall, Vol. II, pp. 3, 4, 6.

Audubon estimated the number of birds in one of these flocks at eleven hundred millions, and calculated

that they would require more than eight millions of bushels of seeds and grains for feed each day. Another flock seen by Wilson was greater still. He judged them in flight, to extend over two hundred and forty miles. He concluded that they must have numbered more than twenty-two hundreds of millions, and consumed above seventeen millions of bushels of seed and grains daily.

> "As the sun begins to decline, they depart in a body for the *general roost,* which is often hundreds of miles distant, and is generally chosen in the tallest and thickest forests, almost divested of underwood. Nothing can exceed the waste and desolation of these nocturnal resorts. * * * The tall trees for thousands of acres are completely killed, and the ground strewed with massy branches torn down by the clustering weight of the birds which have rested upon them. The whole region for several years presents a continued scene of devastation, as if swept by the resistless blast of a whirlwind. * * *
>
> "The *breeding places,* as might naturally be expected, differ from the roosts in their greater extent. In 1807, according to Wilson, one of these immense nurseries, near Shelbyville, in Kentucky, was several miles in breadth and extended through the woods for upwards of forty miles. * * * Wilson often counted upwards of ninety nests in a single tree, and the whole forest was filled with them. * * * But their most destructive enemy is man; and as soon as the young are fully grown, the neighboring inhabitants assemble and encamp for several days around the devoted pigeons with wagons, axes, and cooking utensils, like the outskirts of a destructive army. The perpetual tumult of the birds, the crowding and fluttering multitudes, the thundering roar of their wings, and the crash

> of falling trees, from which the young are thus precipitated to the ground by the axe, produces altogether a scene of indescribable and almost terrific confusion. It is dangerous to walk beneath these clustering crowds of birds, from the frequent descent of large branches broken down by the congregating millions; the horses start at the noise, and conversation can only be heard in a shout."

To the foregoing extract from Nuttall's book is appended the following note:

> "The most important of recent contributions to the biography of this species is Mr. William Brewster's article in *The Auk* for October, 1889. He tells there of a 'nesting' in Michigan in 1877 that covered an area twenty-eight miles long and three to four miles wide, and says: 'For the entire distance of twenty-eight miles every tree of any size had more or less nests, and many trees were filled with them.'" Nutall's Birds of the United States and Canada, Vol. II, pp. 4, 5, 7.

L. B. Jones, an intelligent citizen somewhat advanced in years, and who lives near Holly Springs, informed me that his grandfather settled on Pigeon Roost Creek at a very early date; that he often heard both his grandfather and father relate their experiences with the wild pigeons which in the years long passed, roosted in the forests of Pigeon Roost Creek, from which circumstance the creek derived its name. From them he learned the pigeons came in vast flocks, lighting on the limbs of the trees, while belated ones perched on the backs of those who arrived first; and by thus piling or perching

on the backs of each other, the weight of the pigeons became so great as to strip and tear down some of the largest trees of the forest.

The people of that vicinity would go to the roost and bring back wagon loads of the pigeons, whose numbers seemed to be almost infinite.

Beaumont M. Stratton, though a Confederate veteran with many scars of that great conflict on his body, is still youthful of heart and vigorous of body, and as might be supposed, having reached the reminiscent age, is fond of recalling his early recollections. His father, Major Thomas Stratton, moved from Middle Tennessee to the southern part of Shelby County, in the early fifties, and at that time the most of the country was in woods and was a wilderness.

Mr. Stratton says that when a boy he had often gone south in Mississippi to the bottoms of Coldwater River, and there saw the destruction wrought by the wild pigeons to the great forests springing from the rich alluvial soil. Many of the smaller trees were stripped of their limbs and broken down, while many monarchs of the forest had lost great limbs and were so stripped of their branches as to present mere shadows of their former proportions.

Mr. Stratton further states that in those early years the wild pigeons were still passing over the country in great flocks of incredible numbers, so that at times their numbers were so great as to obstruct the rays of the sun, the shadow of the birds falling upon the earth so as to give the appearance of twilight, or the shades of evening.

From L. B. Jones and C. H. Curd, mentioned above, I also learned that the north branch of Pigeon Roost Creek had its head in the once famous Springs which with the adjacent holly trees gave to Holly Springs its name. The main branch of the creek, however, originates beyond or south of Holly Springs.

From these gentlemen and Judge J. P. Young, of Memphis, I learned that going south from Memphis on the Pigeon Roost road, it deflects at Byhalia from the present Holly Springs road, trending in a more southward direction, leading on to Chulahoma, where Judge Young was born, and leaving Holly Springs about six miles to the east of its course opposite that city.

This is in entire accord with Lusher's map.

On Lusher's map of 1835 (hereinafter more particularly referred to) the streams in the Chickasaw country are laid down with more detail and accuracy than upon any other map before or since that time; and while nearly all the streams have Indian names only, Pigeon Roost Creek forms an exception, and had on this map the same name it bears to this day.

The fact is that the creek was so named on account of the vast pigeon roosts which formerly formed a conspicuous feature of its heavily timbered bottoms; and bear in mind that this giant timbered country was the country to attract the pigeons for a roosting place. This roosting place must have been famous far and near, for it gave not only its name to the large creek in question, but to one of the most important thoroughfares leading to Memphis, a distance of some fifty miles.

Lusher's map also shows that the short-cut Indian trail or trace crossed the head waters of the Pigeon Roost Creek. This roost was undoubtedly known to the Chickasaws, for nothing of this character escaped their notice; and moreover, it was doubtless a great asset to them where, at least in certain years, they found an unlimited supply of most palatable and wholesome food. Indeed, the existence of this roost may have been one of the reasons for a trail passing through that vicinity.

The Trail from Holly Springs to New Albany—

Not having personally traveled over the former Chickasaw trail from Holly Springs to New Albany, I wrote to Judge Charles Lee Crum, of New Albany, for a description of that part of the country and received the following answer:

> "Before describing the country directly from New Albany to Holly Springs, I will say that I was born in 1867 where the village of Hickory Flat now is, which is fourteen miles northwest from New Albany, and twenty miles southeast from Holly Springs. My grandfather, Eli Crum, moved onto his farm at the very place where Hickory Flat now is, in December, 1837, at which time my father, W. A. Crum, was an infant three months old. This was before the Indians left. My father owned this place until his death in A. D. 1910. So you can understand that having for years held this as the paternal home, and on account of its being nearly midway between New Albany and Holly Springs and having lived for twenty-five years at the former place, I have had opportunity to know this country. Besides being a lawyer by profession, I have since my boyhood hunted wild game considerably and traveled over all this country horseback and otherwise.

I have heard my father say repeatedly that the public road from Memphis to Pontotoc was originally laid out along what was an Indian trail. This highway ran from Memphis via Holly Springs, Potts Camp, Winborn, about three-fourths mile north of where Hickory Flat now is, crossed Tallahatchie River about three-fourths mile southwest of the court house in New Albany, and thence to the town of Pontotoc and covered high ground except in crossing the following streams: Chewalla, Tippah River, head waters of Okalimetah, Ayers Creek (a very small stream), Big Creek (sometimes called Hell Creek), and Tallahatchie. The crossing at the time of the earliest recollections of white settlers on Tallahatchie River, before bridges were built, were only two. One was at Rocky Ford, where Etta postoffice now is. The other was three-fourths mile southwest of New Albany Courthouse, on what is now my farm property and immediately in the rear of my present residence which is known as 'Riverside.'

There is a bluff immediately west of the ford at Rocky Ford and there has been to my personal knowledge for forty years a very large rock just below this ford, which is nearly round in top appearance and which projected several feet above the low water forty years ago. The rock appears to have been a boulder which rolled down from off this bluff. The hill which projects to the river here and makes this bluff has numerous such rocks on it now. It is about twelve miles on an air line from New Albany to Rocky Ford. I am not advised whether there was an Indian trail that crossed here, but it was a ford where the road crossed as early as the white settlers settled now living know. The river here runs on the south side of the low bottom, which low land is about one mile wide and many years ago was very slashy on north half. It is conceded that De Soto fought a battle with the Indians

who had a village where New Albany now is, after leaving the Indian settlement east of Pontotoc. From New Albany to Rocky Ford, to travel south of Tallahatchie, would, in De Soto's time, have required covering a distance of twenty or thirty-five miles, for down the river in the low lands was very swampy even as late as I can remember and covered with thick canes, rattan and other vines and much undergrowth. Besides there are several large creeks that run into Tallahatchie from the south that he would have been obliged to cross.

Tallahatchie bottom at New Albany is less than four hundred yards wide and the crossing was at a swift place with a solid rock bottom, and Esq. Reaves, who was for many years the Mayor of New Albany, has told me that an Indian ford was there before the white man used it in the early settlement for a public highway. Here is where the Memphis and Pontotoc road first crossed Tallahatchie.

From all I have heard and read on the course taken by De Soto I am convinced that, after fighting the Indians here at New Albany, he crossed Tallahatchie at the rock bottom ford south of the town, traveled in a northwest direction along the trail via Hickory Flat (where there was an Indian village on my grandfather's place in 1837), Potts Camp, Holly Springs and on to the Chickasaw Bluffs at Memphis. * * *

On each side of the river near this ford with rock bottom at New Albany were evidently Indian camps of minor importance. *They were near large lakes which then existed* and between them on high back-bones or ridges. These ridges are now in my farm and hundreds of arrow-heads, tomahawks, pestle and mortar rocks and other relics have been found. My son, now sixteen, has several hundred arrow and spear-heads of all sizes. At these minor camps the Indians evidently camped, fished and hunted in good weather when the river was low."

Attention is called to the words in italics stating that the old Indian camps "were near large lakes which then existed and between them on high back-bones or ridges." These lakes, or pondy places were scattered over the hill country of the Chickasaws, as all observant persons know to have been the case, before the country was deforested.

In a subsequent letter Judge Crum says:

> "The channel of the old Tallahatchie River adjacent to the point in the river where the rock-bottom ford anciently existed, which is about ¾ of a mile southwest from the court house at New Albany, was (until as late as 1898, at which time I purchased the land), very deep, with the banks of the river on the east side very high and perpendicular. In fact I live now on this high point that projects into where the old channel was then.
>
> The topography then agreed very well with the description which the Spaniard, Garcilaso de la Vega gave of it in his diary, considering the time that has elapsed.
>
> As attorney for the Tallahatchie District I had a canal dug down the bottom for a distance of 30 miles. The width of the canal is 30 feet or more at its top end to 60 feet or more at its mouth at the west line of Union County. There is no place in the river where there was a solid rock bottom, except at New Albany, and although the canal is 18 feet deep in places, we encountered no rock in digging it."

It will thus be seen that the main topographical features of the country from Pontotoc on to the Chickasaw Bluffs are quite similar; and these features should be borne in mind when we read the various narratives.

CHAPTER V.

THE FOUR DE SOTO NARRATIVES QUOTED AND COMPARED.

We come now to consider the four separate narratives of the De Soto Expedition. Dr. Rowland, following in the footsteps of Prof. Lewis, adopts the three narratives of the Gentleman of Elvas, Rodrigo Ranjel and Hernandez de Biedma, as edited by Edward Gaylord Bourne in the "Trail Makers." They reject altogether the narrative of Garcilaso de la Vega.

For the present I will follow their selection, because these three narratives so selected by them, when examined, especially in the light of the topography and geology of the country and the condition surrounding the expedition, demonstrate that the Mississippi was discovered at the Chickasaw Bluffs.

Later I will show that Garcilaso's is entirely worthy of credit, and if this is so, then they admit they are out of court.

I will now briefly refer to the time each of the four narratives appeared in print following exactly the order observed by Bourne as set forth in his preface.

First: "The Gentleman of Elvas."

This narrative purports to have been written by a Portugese gentleman (not a Spaniard), and was first published at Evora, Portugal, in 1557. The narrative also purports to have been written by one who accompanied De Soto, but the writer did not reveal his name, and it is not known to this day. Some who reject Gar-

cilaso, also reject the Gentleman of Elvas, but not so Bourne and his followers, who put great reliance thereon.

Second: Bourne admits that "next in order of publication and equal in fame comes" Garcilaso, which was first published in Lisbon in 1605, or only 62 years after the death of De Soto, and again re-published in Madrid in 1722. It is admitted that Garcilaso was of noble birth, and that he was a historian of distinction aside from his De Soto narrative.

His narrative is rejected by some after the lapse of some hundreds of years, because he states that he was not a member of the expedition, but got his information from a nobleman, who did accompany the expedition and who, for a lifetime, had been Garcilaso's bosom friend and constantly related the incidents of the expedition, and these were supplemented by notes taken down by two privates in the expedition; so that the narrative is based on the testimony of three witnesses.

Third: The narrative of Hernandez de Biedma, the King's factor, was drawn up in 1544, but not published until 1841, and then in French, by the French scholar, Ternaux-Campons, the first English edition appearing in 1850. On page XV, Bourne commends Biedma's narrative as an official account, though giving few details, "except as to directions and distances"; or in other words he is said to be accurate in giving details "as to directions and distances," which is an important admission, as shown further on.

Fourth: Rodrigo Ranjel was the private secretary of De Soto, and his narrative did not come to light until 1866, when, according to Bourne, it was revealed in Oviedo's Historia General Y Natural de las Indias. Bourne says also that he was convinced that Oviedo's account had imbedded in it Rodrigo Ranjel's journal in the same way as the journal of Columbus of his second voyage was preserved by Las Casas in his Historia de las Indias.

It can readily be seen that the Ranjel account may have suffered important changes through the channels it has reached us; nevertheless by the authors mentioned it is given first rank for accuracy, followed next by the Gentleman of Elvas, then by Biedma, while they reject altogether Garcilaso.

We now meet them on their chosen ground.

When doing this, however, I will quote the text of these three narratives, word for word, and I will decline to accept the versions thereof by Prof. Lewis and followed by Dr. Rowland, for important words are not only left out, but interpolations are made without the least regard to the originals. These quotations will begin with the departure of De Soto from near the seat of the Chickasaw Nation, in what is now Pontotoc County, for it seems to be now conceded that the expedition crossed Tallahatchie River near New Albany, where there is for that country a very unusual geological formation, namely a solid rock bottom for the river, the meaning of the Indian word Tallahatchie being rock river.

The Text of the Gentleman of Elvas—

"From some prisoners taken, the governor informed himself of the region in advance. On the 25th day of April (1541) he left Chicaca and went to sleep at a small town called Alimamu. Very little maize was found; and as it became necessary *to attempt thence to pass a desert, seven days' journey* in extent, the next day the governor ordered that three captains, each with cavalry and foot, should take a different direction, to get provisions for the way. Juan de Anasco, the comptroller, went with fifteen horse and forty foot on the course the governor would have to march, and found a staked fort where the Indians were awaiting them. Many were armed, walking upon it, with their bodies, legs and arms painted and ochred, red, black, white, yellow and vermilion in stripes, so that they appeared to have on stockings and doublet. Some wore feathers, and others horns on the head, the face blackened, and the eyes encircled with vermilion, to heighten their fierce aspect. So soon as they saw the Christians draw nigh they beat drums, and, with loud yells, in great fury came forth to meet them. As to Juan de Anasco and others it appeared well to avoid them, and to inform the governor, they retired, over an even ground in sight, the distance of a cross-bow shot from the enclosure, the footmen, the cross-bow men and targeteers putting themselves before those on horseback, that the beasts might not be wounded by the Indians, who came forth by sevens and eights to discharge their bows at them and retire. In sight of the Christians they made a fire, and, taking an Indian by the head and feet, pretended to give him many blows on the head and cast him into the flames, signifying in this way what they would do with the Christians.

A message being sent with three of the cavalry to the governor, informing him of this, he came directly. It was his opinion that they should be

driven from the place. He said that if this was not done they would be emboldened to make an attack at some other time, when they might do him more harm; those on horseback were commanded to dismount, and, being set in four squadrons, at the signal charged the Indians. They resisted until the Christians came up to the stakes; then, seeing they could not defend themselves, *they fled through that part near which passed a stream, sending back some arrows from the other bank; and because, at the moment, no place was found where the horses might ford, they had time to make their escape. Three Indians were killed and many Christians wounded, of whom, after a few days, fifteen died on the march.* Every one thought the governor committed a great fault in not sending to examine the state of the ground on the opposite shore, and discover the crossing-place before making the attack; because, with the hope the Indians had of escaping unseen in that direction, they fought until they were broken; and it was the cause of their holding out so long to assail the Christians, as they could, with safety to themselves.

How the Governor Went from Quizquiz, and Thence to the River Grande—

Three days having gone by since some maize had been sought after, and but little found in comparison with the great want there was of it, the governor became obliged to move at once, notwithstanding the wounded had need of repose, to where there should be abundance. *He accordingly set out for Quizquiz, and marched seven days through a wilderness, having many pondy places, with thick forests, fordable, however, on horseback, all to some basins or lakes that were swum.* He arrived at a town of Quizquiz without being descried, and seized

all the people before they could come out of their homes. Among them was the mother of the Cacique; and the governor sent word to him, by one of the captives, to come and receive her, with the rest he had taken. The answer he returned was, that if his lordship would order them to be loosed and sent, he would come to visit and do him service.

The governor, since his men arrived weary, and likewise weak, for want of maize, and the horses were also lean, determined to yield to the requirement and try to have peace; so the mother and the rest were ordered to be set free, and with words of kindness were dismissed. The next day, while he was hoping to see the chief, many Indians came, with bows and arrows, to set upon the Christians, when he commanded that all the armed horsemen should be mounted and in readiness. *Finding them prepared, the Indians stopped at the distance of a crossbow shot from where the governor was, near a river bank,* where, after remaining quietly half an hour, six chiefs arrived at the camp, stating that they had come to find out what people it might be; for they had knowledge from their ancestors that they were to be subdued by a white race; they consequently desired to return to the Cacique, to tell him that he should come presently to obey and serve the governor. After presenting six or seven skins and shawls brought with him, they took their leave, and returned with the others who were waiting for them by the shore. The Cacique came not, nor sent another message.

There was little maize in the place, *and the governor moved to another town, half a league from the great river,* here it was found in sufficiency. He went to look at the river, and saw that near it there was much timber of which piraguas might be made, and a good situation in which the camp might be placed. He directly moved, built

houses, and settled on a plain a crossbow shot from the water, bringing together there all the maize of the towns behind, that at once they might go to work and cut down trees for sawing out planks to build barges. The Indians soon came from up the stream, jumped on shore, and told the governor they were the vassals of a great lord, named Aquixo, who was the suzerain of many towns and people on the other shore; and they made known from him, that he would come the day after, with all his people, to hear what his lordship would command him."

The Text of Biedma—

"We remained here perhaps two months, getting ready what were necessary of saddles, lances and targets, and then left, *taking the direction to the northwest, toward a province called Alibamo.*

At this time befell us what is said never to have occurred to the Indians. In the highway over which we had to pass, without there being either women to protect or provisions to secure, and only to try our valour with theirs, the Indians put up a very strong stockade directly across the road, about three hundred of them standing behind it, resolute to die rather than give back. So soon as they observed our approach, some came out to shoot their arrows, threatening that not one of us should remain alive. When we had surveyed their work, thus defended by men, we supposed they guarded something—provisions perhaps—of which we stood greatly in need, for we had calculated to cross a desert of twelve days' journey in its extent, where we could have nothing to eat but what we carried. We alighted, some forty or fifty men, and put ourselves on two sides, arranging that at the sound of the trumpet we should all enter the barricade at one time. We did accordingly, carrying it, al-

though at some cost, losing on our side seven or eight men, and having twenty-five or twenty-six more wounded. We killed some Indians, and took others, from whom we learned that they had done this to measure themselves with us, and nothing else. We looked about for food, although at great hazard, that we might begin our journey in the wilderness.

We traveled eight days with great care, in tenderness of the wounded and the sick we carried. *One mid-day we came upon a town called Quizquiz,* and so suddenly to the inhabitants, that they were without any notice of us, the men being away at work in the maize fields. We took more than three hundred women, and the few skins and shawls they had in their houses. There we first found a little walnut of the country, which is much better than that here in Spain. *The town was near the banks of the River Espiritu Santo.* They had told us that it was, with many towns about there, tributary to a lord of Pacaha, famed throughout the land. When the men heard that we had taken their women, they came to us peacefully, requesting the governor to restore them. He did so, and asked them for canoes in which to pass that great river. These they promised, but never gave; on the contrary, they collected to give us battle, coming in sight of the town where we were; but in the end not venturing to make an attack, they turned and retired.

We left that place and went to encamp by the riverside, to put ourselves in order for crossing. On the other shore we saw numbers of people collected to oppose our landing, who had many canoes. We set about building four large piriguas, each capable of taking sixty or seventy men and five or six horses. We were engaged in the work twenty-seven or twenty-eight days."

The Text of Ranjel—

"Tuesday, April 26, *in the year aforesaid,* 1541, *the governor, Hernando de Soto, set out from the plain of Chicaca, and arrived at Limamu for the night;* and there they searched for corn, because the Indians had hidden it, and they had to pass over a desert. And Thursday they came to another plain where the Indians had taken the position, having made a very strong barricade, and within it there were many Indian braves, painted red and decorated with other colours which appeared very fine (or rather, very bad, at least it meant harm to the Christians). And they entered the barricade by force, and with some loss by death and wounds on the part of the commander and his army, and with a loss greater beyond comparison on the part of the conquered; and it would have been still more if the Indians had not taken flight.

Saturday, the last day of April, the army set out from the place of the barricade and marched nine days through a deserted country and by a rough way, mountainous and swampy, until May 8th, when they came to the first village of Quizquiz, which they took by assault and captured much people and clothes; but the governor promptly restored them liberty and had everything restored to them for fear of war, although that was not enough to make friends of these Indians. *A league beyond this village* they came upon another with abundance of corn, *and soon again after another league, upon another likewise amply provisioned. There they saw the great river.* Saturday, May 21, the force went along to a plain between the river and a small village, and set up quarters and began to build four barges to cross over to the other side. Many of these conquerors said this river was larger than the Danube."

It may be thought that my quotations are entirely too lengthy for the few sentences of pertinent matter, as compared to that which is not pertinent. My excuse is, first, I wish the reader to see the entire context, and thus at the same time do entire justice, and so that no one may say anything was omitted. It is almost unnecessary to add that all the italics in this article are my own, which I use in order to direct the attention of the reader to such parts as I deem pertinent to the points at issue.

Opinion of Professor Lewis Criticised—

Dr. Rowland states that Theodore Hayes Lewis is a learned antiquarian, archeologist and historian, and that no historian has thought it wise to question his conclusions; but we have seen that Judge Young, a real historian, has sharply questioned the conclusions of Prof. Lewis. Moreover, though I am not an historian, or antiquarian or archeologist, still I am here and now to pointedly question the conclusions of Prof. Lewis, believing that no one, whatever may be his acquirements, has a right to preempt the discussion or an exclusive right to express an opinion on a matter so plain that any man of ordinary understanding can easily form an intelligent opinion. In point of fact, I believe, that the phrase, "much learning doth make thee mad," which was so misapplied near two thousand years ago, to one of the greatest men the world ever heard, in the High Court of Appeals in a kingly palace, can be well applied to the two learned authors, in relation to this discussion.

Let us see—

On page 146, Centenary Series, No. II, Dr. Rowland quotes Prof. Lewis as stating the route of De Soto, *after* crossing the Tallahatchie, in these words:

> "On Saturday, April 30, the army left this enclosed place, turning to the westward."

The three narratives will be searched in vain for any statement that the expedition *turned* at all, and least of all, *westward*. The statement is a complete interpolation.

This is not by any means all, for it will be recalled that their favorite author, Bourne, commends Biedma's short narrative for accuracy "as to *directions* and distances." Now Biedma's narrative is the only one which undertakes to give the direction that De Soto took after leaving the Chickasaw nation; and as the two other narratives are silent on this point, certainly when the third one, commended for accuracy in this particular, gives the direction it must be accepted as true. What does Biedma say?

> "We remained here two months, getting ready what was necessary of saddles, lances and targets and then left, *taking the direction to the northwest,* towards a province called Alibamo."

Why was this direction, which so plainly and unmistakably pointed to the Chickasaw Bluffs, omitted; and why were the words "turning to the westward" interpolated, and which so plainly pointed to Tunica County?

Having thus airily and neatly constructed a paper-turning for the expedition in a paper direction westward, so as to reach "somewhere" in dear old Tunica, the next thought of the guide, philosopher and friend of Dr. Rowland seems to have been to neatly construct a companion paper-route for the De Soto expedition, especially adapted to the canebrakes, lakes and fastnesses of the Mississippi delta.

However, acquitting the learned author of any intentional purpose to warp the plain story of the narratives, still, when examined, his account exhibits an almost perfect adaptation of a means to an end.

Immediately following the sentence above quoted and criticised, Prof. Lewis says:

> "'According to Elvas, the country they were now passing through was a wilderness of thick forests, having many marshy places that were fordable, and some basins and lakes (sluggish streams) that were not.' In another place he says: 'The land is low, abounding in lakes.' Ranjel says they passed over bad roads leading through woods and swamps."

It would be difficult to more incorrectly misstate what was really said by the two narrators than is found in the above quotation from Prof. Lewis. Elvas will be searched in vain for the sentence ascribed to him in quotation marks, "the land was low, abounding in lakes." Where, then, did this sentence come from?

Here is what Elvas said:

> "He accordingly set out for Quizquiz, and marched seven days through a wilderness, having

> many pondy places, with thick forests, fordable however, on horseback, all to some basins or lakes that were swum."

The sentence is involved and not well worded, although Elvas is especially acclaimed to be the best scholar among the narrators; still just how the Professor is able to interpret the above language to mean that there were some basins and lakes that were not fordable, when the narrator expressly states the reverse, I am unable to see.

Moreover, it will be noted that the Professor uses the conjunctive "and" between basins and lakes; whereas Elvas uses the disjunctive "or" between them. As explained hereinbefore, in treating of the topographical features of the small plateaus in the country southeast of the fourth Chickasaw Bluffs, they abounded with marshy places, basins or lakes. Elvas wrote basins *or* lakes; or as he had just said "pondy places," evidently meaning that these places scarcely arose to the proportions of what we understand to be a lake. The Professor not only eliminates the qualified language of Elvas, but makes him convey the idea that the lakes were so large that they were not fordable, thus evidently pointing to the Mississippi swamps.

But if the Professor erroneously and improperly stated what Elvas said, then he is worse than erroneous in quoting from Ranjel who, it will be remembered, is declared to be the most accurate of all the narrators.

The Professor quotes Ranjel thus:

> "Ranjel says they passed over bad roads leading through woods and swamps."

Ranjel said no such thing. What he recorded is in these words:

> "Saturday the last of April, the army set out from the place of barricade and marched nine days through a deserted country and by a rough way, *mountainous* and swampy," etc.

I ask by what principle of interpretation or fairness, did the Professor omit the word *mountainous,* which Ranjel used and which with marked precision described the Tippah Highlands, which reached down into Marshall County and over which the Chickasaw trail passed? He knew there was no mountainous country leading from where New Albany now is to the imaginary point in Tunica County where he was laboring to land De Soto.

Indeed after eliminating the word *mountainous* from Ranjel's account he used the garbled statement to point his argument that the discovery was made in the Mississippi swamps; for he immediately adds: "This part of the route lay wholly within the State of Mississippi for, had it been toward Memphis, they would have passed through a hilly region instead of one of swamps." Yes, indeed, the country through which De Soto really did pass was in point of fact not only hilly, but to use the exact word of Ranjel "mountainous," at least in appearance; and to use his other word there were parts of it "swampy." Paradoxical as it may seem at first blush, nevertheless Ranjel perfectly describes the two main features of the country traversed by the Chickasaw trail, when he used the words "swampy and mountainous."

That is to say, the bottoms of Nonconnah, Coldwater, Tippah, and numerous other smaller streams which were crossed were filled with swamps, cypress brakes, pondy places, lagoons, morasses and almost impenetrable thickets and forests, so as to make them veritable wildernesses; while the abrupt high hills of the Tippah highlands, reaching down into Marshall county, gave that part of the country a mountainous aspect, and this topographical feature of the country remains to this day. And still Dr. Rowland is surprised that any one should have the temerity to question the conclusions of Prof. Lewis!

It is amusing to read the sentence of the professor locating the point where the great river was discovered, the *ipse dixit* characteristic, being its main feature. He says: "The crossing was made either at Council Bend or Walnut Bend, in Tunica County, in a straight line some 25 to 38 miles below Memphis." That this is a guess pure and simple, without one line of support in any narrative is perfectly apparent. There are dozens of bends on the river similar to these, and there is no pretense of a physical feature at either point to identify it as the landing place.

There is likewise a significant silence on the part of Prof. Lewis, with respect to the several Indian villages and the fields of growing maize, not to mention the hundreds and even thousands of Indians who had a permanent home at the place where the great river was discovered.

The one thing that appears to have burdened the professor's thoughts, was to drive De Soto and his small army through the well nigh impenetrable swamps, morasses, cane brakes, sloughs and lagoons of Tallahatchie and Coldwater river bottoms, not to mention that of the Mississippi, which are worse than those of the Yalobusha, the word "Yalobusha" in the Indian language meaning tadpole place. Apparently, in the opinion of the professor, any old place in the Mississippi swamps, even a tadpole place, was quite eligible for a permanent home for the Indians.

And again the professor and his friend, Dr. Rowland, seem oblivious to the fact that it is actually a little farther, on an air line, from Pontotoc in the northeastern part of the state, to the ubiquitous place in Tunica county, where they claim the river was discovered, than it is to the Chickasaw Bluffs, leading to which were well known and well traveled Chickasaw trails, affording a far better road to the river; whereas no one pretends that there was any trail of the Chickasaws or of any one else leading to Tunica county.

And finally on this feature of the discussion, can the professor and Dr. Rowland name any river that flows into the Mississippi in Tunica county? It is certain no mention is made of such a river by them, and it is an undeniable fact, resulting from purely natural causes, that no river flows into the Mississippi river on the east side, after Nonconnah, at the south end of the Chickasaw Bluffs, until the mouth of the Yazoo is reached, 300 miles to the south. In fact the surface waters

of Tunica and even those of De Soto, Marshall and Benton counties, bordering on Tennessee, flow into Coldwater river, which deflects southward, joins the Tallahatchie after which their combined waters, with those of the Yalobusha further south, are known as the Yazoo river, entering the Mississippi near Vicksburg.

Another thing is equally undeniable, and that is their favorite author, the Gentleman of Elvas, plainly states that while the Indians were menacing the expedition at the villages of Quizquiz, and before the expedition pitched camp by the Great river, De Soto drew up his horsemen near a river-bluff to confront the Indians. This river formed then and forms now an unmistakable, and may I not add a controlling feature of the country, forever destroying the Tunica county theory, and stamping the fourth Chickasaw Bluffs, with Wolf river flowing into the Mississippi at its north terminus, and Nonconnah (almost a little river), flowing into the great river at its south terminus, as the place where white men first gazed upon the father of waters?

Did the learned historians pass over this unmistakable feature of the country where the discovery was made *sub silentio,* because they were not conversant with the topography of the country; or because they read Elvas so inattentively as to overlook this important matter? I know not. Certain it is that when further on Prof. Lewis undertook to disparage the claims of Memphis, he was alive to physical features, for he commented on

the conformation of the plateau at the bluffs, in order to make a point for his argument, and in this I shall show that he was mistaken.

It is also a little amusing that after the learned historian lands De Soto over in the Arkansas swamps opposite Tunica county, and started him in a course northward and practically parallel with the Great river, the suggestion is made that possibly some earthquake may have changed the topography of the country; and still Dr. Rowland, in his last paper, appeals to the topography of the country as unchangeable!

From this short review I believe the impartial reader will conclude that eltrich and eerie and strange must be the mythical place in Tunica where, in the imaginations of the learned historians, De Soto discovered the Mississippi; and moreover that they must appeal to the miraculous in order to conjure up even a shadow of support for their favorite theory. Indeed, the supposed place where the discovery was made, is an arbitrary conception, as destitute of objective characteristics as the tropic of Capricorn.

De Soto's Route to the Chickasaw Bluffs—

Irrespective of any criticism of the theory of Prof. Lewis and Dr. Rowland, let us endeavor now to place ourselves near the home of the Chickasaw Nation in April, 1541, and with the De Soto expedition when it was about to move forward in search of the new El Dorado, reminding us of the quest for the fabled golden fleece. Where were they and what roads lay before them?

The Chickasaws had chosen as their home and the seat of their government the country lying now in Pontotoc county, Mississippi, as the very best for health, for abundance of everything necessary to their sustenance, as well as for beauty, and as being without a rival in the vast territory of which they were the acknowledged overlords.

Their home was on the well known Pontotoc ridge, which runs north and south, the waters to the east running into the Tombigbee, and those on the west of the ridge running into the Tallahatchie and Coldwater rivers and thence into the Yazoo and on into the Mississippi. Of the home of the Chickasaws Bancroft speaks of it as a land "where the grass is verdant in midwinter; the blue-bird and the robin are heard in February; the springs of pure water gurgle up through the white sands to flow through natural bowers of evergreen holly; and if the earth be but carelessly gashed to receive the kernel of maize, the thick corn springs abundantly from the fertile soil. The region is as happy as any beneath the sun; and the love it inspired made its occupants, though not numerous, yet the most intrepid warriors of the South."

Evidently the Chickasaws exercised that sagacity for which they were noted, in the selection of their home; and being great travelers with a large territory to guard and defend against all intruders, they had well defined trails leading to all important points, and especially to the fourth Chickasaw Bluff, which was their entrepot on the great river, for they were at home upon its bosom, Adair saying that they appeared almost amphibious.

The trails of the Chickasaws leading in various directions were perfectly well known. De Soto had been wandering amid the wilds of the southern wilderness since July 15, 1539; besides he had wandered in the tropical forests of South and Central America, and probably no man then living knew as much as he did about the difficulties of such traveling, or better how to choose the best way. It was scarcely necessary for the Gentleman of Elvas to inform us that "From some prisoners taken, the Governor informed himself of the region in advance." We know he diligently sought information from every source, for this was necessary for self-preservation, the first law of nature.

That while he was for months living with the Chickasaws on the most friendly terms, he learned from them of the great river which, with its tributary, the Ohio, formed their western boundary and their highway for a thousand miles, no one can doubt. For seventy-five years Cushman lived among the Choctaws and Chickasaws, having been raised in their nations, their language being his language, and he says they "named it (the Mississippi) 'Misha Sipokni' (beyond age, whose source and terminus are unknown)." They knew all about the situation of this great river with respect to their country and every foot of their vast domains, and had highways suitable to their wants to all parts of it. De Soto necessarily learned the lay of the country before him and of the Indian trails which were unmistakably marked out on the face of the earth. The Chickasaw long trail for winter as well as for summer, on top of ridges going

almost directly north as far as where Bolivar, Tennessee, now is, then turning west and on to the Chickasaw Bluffs, was much out of the way; and moreover De Soto was moving the last of April, when presumably the short cut route approximately by way of where Holly Springs now is, and onward northwestwardly along where the Pigeon Roost road now runs, was comparatively dry, and he had this road or rather Indian trail over which to travel.

The long trail appears on Lusher's Map of 1835, as well as the short cut trail. This article was mostly written before I knew there was such a map, which I will explain further on.

There is also marked on Lusher's Map of 1835, an intermediate trail, running with the long trail a short distance north from where New Albany now is; thence diverging westward where it crosses the headwaters of the Tallahatchie and Coldwater rivers higher up than the short cut trail, and still bearing northwestward follows the top of the ridge dividing the waters of Wolf river from those of Nonconnah creek, the result being that it crosses neither Wolf or Nonconnah, and does not pass over as large streams as the short cut. The disadvantages of this route consist in the fact that it is longer than the short cut, and being higher up towards the Tippah Highlands, it is more "mountainous." I went over this route some years ago and again in October, 1917, going from Memphis out Poplar Street Boulevard, by Collierville, there turning southward into Mississippi, and some 8 to 10 miles from Collierville we crossed a

very low flat expanse, the soil being evidently retentive of water and while in timber wet and swampy, and partly so even to this day, and of a pondy character. While for the most part the road is on high ground, still we passed over several streams, including Chewalla and Tippah before reaching Potts Camp, beyond Holly Springs. The windings of the road and its characteristics unmistakably stamps it as of Indian origin.

There is a bare possibility that De Soto traveled this trail rather than the short cut, but I do not think that probable.

Lusher's map also shows what I have denominated the short cut route or trail, leading from Memphis along approximately what is now the Pigeon Roost road over which, in my opinion, De Soto passed; but it is due to say that this trail does not appear to cross Tallahatchie at New Albany, but further down and quite near where Tippah flows into Tallahatchie, running thence southwardly to one of the very few places marked on the map, Olacopotoo, which appears to be the modern Toccopola, a village of some 233 inhabitants in Pontotoc County.

Here the trail forks; one fork runs almost due east, only 12 miles on section lines, to Pontotoc, which, of course, is marked on the map; while the other fork runs much further southward. I am frank to say that I do not believe that De Soto passed over this southern part of the short cut trail, and my opinion is that he followed the main trail northwestward, crossing Tallahatchie where New Albany now is, on the rock bottom of the river. This is the conclusion also of Prof. Lewis.

My opinion is that not far northward of New Albany, there was a trail connecting the main trail with the short cut trail, precisely as the intermediate trail is shown on the map to diverge westward from the main trail, only about one mile northward from New Albany; or it may be that the divergence was from the intermediate trail to the short cut, thus making a saving of distance of some 20 to 30 computed miles and crossing many less high hills. This view is precisely in accord with the statement of Judge Crum, as to the route the short cut took from New Albany on to Holly Springs, and thence on to where Memphis now is, as quoted hereinbefore.

While Holly Springs is not on Lusher's map, still it does show the short-cut trail as crossing the head waters of Coldwater River, Byhalia, Red Banks and Pigeon Roost Creeks, and these streams are crossed today by the Pigeon Roost road.

It is due to say, however, that according to my reckoning the trail did not pass the spot where Holly Springs is now located, but passed some six miles westward. I feel quite sure that Dr. Lowe is entirely correct in saying that the high land whereon Holly Springs is located stands off to itself, and is entirely disconnected with the Tippah highlands, though some modern maps show otherwise. Lusher's map corroborates this statement of Dr. Lowe, in that it shows no streams passing over the immediate vicinity of Holly Springs, but does show streams radiating in various directions from that vicinity; from which I infer that the uplift or spur whereon

the little city is located, furnishes, at least in part, the origin of adjacent creeks.

It is well here to note that the Indian trails or traces on Lusher's map are uniformly represented by *continuous* faint lines, and that none of the many Indian trails or traces are designated by a name.

There is one trail, and one only, that forms a marked exception to all other trails; and consists of a *dotted* line, commencing on the west side of the Mississippi River (with two dots on the west side thereof), the commencing point being opposite the name "Helena," evidently the present Helena, Arkansas, this being one of the few places on the map with an English name.

This dotted line on the east side of the river trends east by north, passing near the southern end of Beaver Dam Lake, until it nearly reaches Coldwater River, where it is joined by another *dotted* line, commencing on the east side of the Mississippi River, about opposite the north end of Beaver Dam Lake; running thence eastward to where the two dotted lines meet; and thence the dotted line crosses Coldwater and runs northeastward until it ends with joining a regular Indian trail about six computed miles from the point where the short-cut Indian trail crosses Pigeon Roost Creek, and about 12 computed miles southwest of where Holly Springs now is. This dotted line is plainly marked "Helena trace"; whereas none of the many Indian traces or continuous lines have any names marked on them.

It is evident that this "Helena trace" was of recent origin, and a pathway made by the white man; and be-

ing the only trace trending east and west through the Mississippi swamps, gives emphasis to the fact that there was no Indian trace or trail that led to the Mississippi River at any point except to the fourth Chickasaw Bluff, to which three Indian trails led from the Chickasaw home, where Pontotoc now is.

And now as to maps in general and Lusher's map in particular, I will say that I give scant credit thereto unless the maps were made upon actual survey. Thus, why should anyone put any great confidence in the favorite map of Prof. Lewis, viz: that of De L' Isle, published in 1718, or 177 years after De Soto discovered the Mississippi; and this map, according to the professor, was the first that undertook to locate the place where the river was discovered?

Simply because a man is a cartographer he is not inspired with the gift of location; for at last the accuracy of the map must depend on the knowledge of the cartographer as to the real location of any place which he undertakes to place on a piece of paper. What source of knowledge did De L' Isle possess as to where the river was discovered that we have not? Probably he had not so much information as we, for the Biedma and Ranjel narratives have only recently come to light; and it is practically certain he knew absolutely nothing as to the topography of the country. Prof. Lewis rejects as worthless most of the maps relative to this matter.

To illustrate the utter worthlessness and unreliability of some of the work of cartographers, consult the Atlas Vol. 10, p. 4 of the Century Dictionary, which undertakes to show the route pursued by various discoverers on this continent, and among them the route of De Soto. According to this map De Soto did not go far enough north in Mississippi to reach the Chickasaw country, and crossed the great river about where Vicksburg now is.

Probably more money and talent were bestowed on bringing out that great dictionary than on any other in the history of this country, still no one who has carefully studied this matter can defend this so-called map, showing the route of De Soto through Mississippi.

A word as to Lusher's map. The copy I examined belongs to Captain J. D. Fontaine, nestor of the New Albany bar, who kindly lent it to E. T. Winston of Pontotoc to send to me for examination, with many injunctions for safe keeping and its safe return. From outside to outside it is 18 x 24 inches, of fine workmanship, is on quite thin, but good paper, folds up book-like, with extra good binding, so that it can be carried in the coat pocket. This is the inscription on it: "Map of the land ceded by the Chickasaws to the United States in 1832 and 1834 from actual survey by Henry M. Lusher, draughtsman in the office of the Surveyor General of lands in Missis. Ceded by the Chickasaws, 1835. Approved John Bell, Surveyor of land in Missis. Ceded by the Chickasaws, Benja. Reynolds Chickasaw Agent."

Beneath the above in small print there is this: "Pendleton's Lithography, Boston Eddy. delt. on stone." Of course there was the usual display of capitals, etc., but I have made a literal copy of the verbiage; from which I think it appears that the map is as authentic and correct as one could be made in 1835. The Indians had not then left Mississippi, but were still occupying their ancestral homes.

In a letter Mr. Winston called my attention to what he termed the main Chickasaw trail, a part of which is indistinctly shown on Lusher's map, and which, coming from the south, intersected the Tombigbee on the east, where Columbus now is.

Winston then quotes from Claiborne, saying that De Soto followed an Indian trail or buffalo path some five miles up to Lincecum's shoals just above the mouth of the Tibbee and a little below the present town of Waverly. The Tombigbee here is bifurcated by an island, the first obstruction below Butahatchie. The gravel discharged from this stream lodged against the island and rendered both channels fordable a great part of the year, and this is the only point where the Spaniards could have forded in December. It was the crossing used by the Choctaws when going to their villages and hunting grounds east of the Tombigbee. The trail struck here a stretch of prairie between Tibbee and Hanging Kettle creeks, and crossed the present Mobile and Ohio railroad at Lookhattan, thence a little west of the railroad by Muldon, Prairie station and Egypt.

The early settlers of this portion of Mississippi remember the well worn, beaten trail, long disused but distinctly defined, and can to this day trace it from plantation to plantation.

On leaving Egypt the trail tended northwest up the ridge known as Featherston's ridge, through a series of glades three or four miles west of Okalona and up the second bottom on the east side of Suckartouchee Creek. There it struck Pontotoc ridge four miles east of the ancient Chickasaw Council House. Near this point stood the first Chickasaw town, and in the vicinity the Spaniards went into winter quarters.

Winston then gives the route of De Soto as passing thence up the Pontotoc ridge to New Albany and thence (as he thought) along the short cut to the Chickasaw Bluffs; and this in the opinion of Mr. Winston was the route over which De Soto traveled, and discovered the great river where Memphis now is. For years he has studied this matter very carefully from every angle, and being on the ground and understanding the topography of the country thoroughly, his opinion is entitled to great weight.

Remember there was no Indian trail towards Tunica County or in that direction. If the Indians, going single file, found it impracticable to have a trail through these swamps, how could De Soto expect to cut out a way for his horses, army, their baggage, etc.? All Indian trails wind in and out in a tortuous manner, because

they knew not only the impassable, but the bad places and these they went around. Although the Pigeon Roost road has been changed and partially straightened out, first by order of the public authorities, then by the Pigeon Roost and Chulahoma Turnpike Company, chartered October 31, 1853, when the road was rebuilt and made into a plank road, still it is today one of the crookedest roads leading from Memphis, thus bearing the unmistakable impress of its Indian origin.

Why attribute to De Soto the monumental folly of refusing to travel either one of three well defined trails, leading to the greatest and best known headland in all the lower Mississippi valley on the great river, and on the other hand deliberately choosing to go through the impenetrable swamps where the Indians dared not make a trail for themselves?

Bear in mind also that there was high land across the river from Memphis, where there are even to this day Indian Mounds, where Mound City now is, evidently named after the Mounds, and from which the Indians unquestionably had trails leading northward and westward.

Looking now to the three favorite narratives of Prof. Lewis, we find that they point with unerring accuracy to the short Chickasaw trail as the one used by De Soto.

Biedma is commended for giving the details for directions and distances and he says, "we remained here two months (meaning near the Chickasaws) getting

ready what were necessary of saddles, lances and targets and then left taking the direction to the *northwest,* towards a province called Alibamo." Mark, they went *northwest,* which accurately described the direction of the Chickasaw Bluffs, and is in accord with Lusher's map.

As the expedition started in the direction as we claim, the next inquiry is as to the character of the country over which it passed upon which so much stress is laid by Professor Lewis. He says Ranjel is the most accurate of all the narrators and we will quote not in part, but the exact words used by Ranjel as follows:

> "Saturday, the last of April, the army set out from the place of barricade and marched nine days through a deserted country *and by a rough way, mountainous and swampy,* until May 8, when they came to the first village of Quizquiz, etc."

Mark, in the first place, that they went "by a rough way" which implies that they were traveling over a "way," which means, I think, along an Indian trail, for in common parlance the trail might very well be termed "a rough way," as no doubt it was.

But the important feature is that this rough way was "mountainous and swampy." At first blush the words "mountainous and swampy" might seem contradictory; but when reference is had to the topography and character of the country over which the expedition actually passed, I insist no other two single words could more accurately describe the road De Soto traveled. The abrupt hills on both sides of Holly Springs, being spurs

from the Tippah highland, even to this day rear their heads skyward, as silent witnesses or sentinels, attesting the verity of Ranjel's statement where he says the country was mountainous. This no man, however learned, can deny.

It is equally certain that no mountainous country could be encountered by De Soto had he turned westward on leaving where New Albany now is, as Professor Lewis says he did. Was the Professor impressed with this important fact, when, in quoting Ranjel, he omitted the word "mountainous"?

But it may be said what of the word "swampy" used by Ranjel; and I answer it very correctly fits the river and creek bottoms over which the Chickasaw trail passed.

In view of the fact that the narrative of the Gentleman of Elvas seems to be much relied upon in this connection, I will next quote from that, which is as follows.

> "He accordingly set out for Quizquiz, and marched seven days through a wilderness, having many pondy places, with thick forests, fordable, however, on horseback, all to some basins or lakes that were swum."

The original sentence may have been in good Spanish; if so, the last part has not been happily translated into English. Nevertheless the import of the text is clear, and the only question is—did parts of the trail lead over or through places as above described. Unquestionably they did.

The very fact that the Chickasaws had a long trail on top of the Pontotoc ridge going directly north near to Bolivar, Tennessee, and turning thence abruptly west, and that they also had the intermediate trail both of which were so roundabout, and so much further to the Bluffs than the less used Chickasaw short trail, of itself is a demonstration that the Indians regarded the short trail as a swampy, boggy and dangerous trail, and not fit for use, except in dry seasons or in emergencies.

Any observant man 70 years old, and who knew or passed over the river and creek bottoms on this trail, or over the intermediate trail in his early years, will, without hesitation state that they were covered with thick forests, and interspersed with canebrakes, lagoons, sloughs, cypress brakes and the like, which made them near impassable and veritable wildernesses. Where is the man described that will dispute these facts?

As stated by E. T. Winston the Indians knew every foot of these trails through the bottoms especially, knew the solid ground from that which appeared solid, but in reality was a quagmire; knew the shallow water from the deep water; the hard bottom from quicksand bottom; and knew when and where to cross the streams or lagoons, sloughs, etc., and could pass over almost dry shod where De Soto and his men, burdened with armor and baggage, and with his horses, would find an almost impassable way.

Who doubts the correctness of these deductions?

View the situation from another angle. J. J. Rawlings died in Memphis in 1900, aged 92 years and was then the oldest inhabitant, an honored man and altogether a picturesque character; and in the evening of life he wrote some of his reminiscences, which are preserved in pamphlet form. He was born in 1808, came to the Bluffs in 1824, before Memphis was incorporated; and says that in 1826 or 1827, he and Marcus B. Winchester (the first mayor of Memphis) and W. D. Dabney (soon to be a very prominent man) went down into Mississippi to visit the Chickasaws, and be there when the Indian agent made his disbursements, so they could collect what the Indians owed. After dancing all night, for more than one night, with the dark-eyed beauties of the forest, these three hardy young pioneers started home, when Rawlings relates this incident:

> "On nearing home we were pressing our horses to reach a house we thought was ahead, we never found it. We got lost in Cold Water Bottom, a dark and dismal place. We worried about in the dark until we found it was no use. Our horses being very tired, we stripped them and turned them loose to eat pea vines. We commenced preparing to stay in that horrible place all night. Our first effort was to get a light—no matches in those days. We had spunk and steel and with all our efforts we could never get a fire. We gave it up for a bad job and spread our saddles on the ground. Sleep was not expected. Foxes and wolves were barking all around us, owls hooting—plenty of music—that was not the worst of it, there were millions of mosquitoes to the square inch and it was as much as we could do to save our lives from the infernal

> pests. Next day we reached home, after a sleepless night. On looking in the glass we did not know ourselves. You could not put the point of a pin on our faces and hands where there was not a mosquito bite."

And still Professor Lewis would have us believe that it was almost a picnic trip for De Soto, in 1541, to go through these swamps with his army and horsemen, without a guide, where white men never trod before, and where even the Indians did not venture, except in dry weather or in great emergencies.

CHAPTER VI.

DE SOTO AT THE CHICKASAW BLUFFS.

We now come to a consideration of the topography, and general lay of the land at and adjacent to the fourth Chickasaw Bluffs whereon Memphis is enthroned, and declared by some of the most eminent historians to be the place where the Mississippi River was discovered by Hernando De Soto.

The point where Madison Avenue intersects Front Street is locally considered about the center of the city, though not quite midway between the north and south extremities of the bluff where it intersects the Mississippi; and moreover this point is only about 400 to 500 feet from the water's edge; and doubtless for these reasons it is the first point mentioned by Pashby in stating the altitude of various places in the city.

The Bluff rises at Madison and Front (88) eighty-eight feet above low water; and further below, at the Indian Mounds, called Jackson Mounds, and now forming De Soto Park, the Bluff is (102) one hundred and two feet above low water. Before the advent of the white man there sprang from the tops of these bluffs a giant forest, many of the trees being over one hundred feet high, so that the tops of this great forest rose over (200) two hundred feet above low water.

To any one passing the bluffs on the river, which flows through a flat alluvial delta, this great headland could not fail to make a deep and pleasing impression.

And moreover the bluffs were but an extension or an elbow from the Pontotoc ridge or Tippah highlands, on the southern projection of which the Chickasaws had their home.

Wolf River rises in Tippah County, flows first northward, then westward and enters the Mississippi at the north end of the bluffs; and in this connection it is well to remember that for miles up stream from its mouth an abrupt bluff rises from its eastern and southern shores.

Nonconnah was first called Chickasaw Creek, and would in Europe, be called a river. With its meanders it is probably 50 miles long. Its headwaters also commence in the Tippah highlands, but lower down in Marshall County, Mississippi; and first trend a little north of west and then westward, flowing into the Mississippi at the southern end of the Chickasaw Bluff, only about four or five miles from the mouth of Wolf River. C. D. Johnson, secretary of the Cossitt Library, called to my attention a quaint small volume, entitled *The Navigator;* the first edition of which appeared in 1801, written by a riverman for rivermen navigating the Mississippi and some of its tributaries; and having wood cuts of the Mississippi, very creditable for that early day. In reference to the fourth Chickasaw Bluff the author says:

> "Wolf (called by Hutchins), Margot River. This is a handsome little river on the left side. The French had a fort here just below the mouth of the river, called Assumption Fort, built in the year 1736, during their wars with the Chickasaws, but in the year following a peace ensued, and the fort

was demolished. A good landing may be had at Wolf River, by pulling over after you pass the four islands above.

Fort Pike formally stood just below Wolf River, but a better situation was pitched upon and a fort built two miles lower down the bluff called Fort Pickering.

It occupies the commanding ground of the fourth Chickasaw Bluff, on the left bank of the Mississippi.

The United States have a military factor here, with a few soldiers. The settlement is thin and composed of what is called the half breed, that is a mixture of the whites and Indians, a race of men too indolent to do any permanent good either for themselves or for society. A landing may be had a little above Fort Pickering, but it is not a very good one.

The fourth bluff affords a commanding, airy, pleasant and extensive situation for a settlement, and the soil is remarkably fertile. Opposite the bluff or Wolf River, on the right bank of the Mississippi; there used to stand a Spanish fort, now demolished. When this post was in possession of the Spaniards the commandant had a road cut in a straight line from the mouth of Chickasaw Creek (a small creek two miles below Fort Pickering) to Wolf River for the purpose of taking exercise on horseback."

Thus we see the fourth Chickasaw Bluff was a conspicuous headland, Wolf River and Nonconnah being conspicuous streams entering the river at the north and south sides of the bluff respectively. These bluffs run back forming a backbone or ridge for many miles, and constitutes the watershed between Wolf and Nonconnah, the ridge extending back to the Tippah highlands, or Pontotoc ridge, and being an elbow or arm therefrom.

I learn from J. Paul Gaines, a well known civil engineer, that this ridge is called to this day Poplar Ridge, on account of the splendid trees which abounded thereon, locally miscalled poplars, and which furnished one of the most valuable timbers on this continent. In point of fact the so-called poplar is the tulip tree. In the flowering season the tulip tree bursts radiantly into bloom, with exquisitely scented and strangely colored flowers. Having a lofty grey stem and crown of beautiful leaves the tulip tree is one of the most notable of our forests, and attains in the south a growth of great luxury.

It was on this ridge that the Chickasaws sometimes traveled from their home to the Chickasaw Bluff; and which I have denominated the intermediate trail, and which crosses few streams, and which plainly appears on Lusher's map.

It is possible that De Soto came over this trail, but not probable; for I believe he traveled over the short-cut trail, already fully described. That he came over one or the other is the important consideration, and this I believe appears beyond a reasonable doubt.

Professor Lewis wrought out an argument against the supposition that De Soto discovered the Mississippi river on the Chickasaw Bluffs, based mainly on alleged quotations from Garcilaso de la Vega, one purpose of which, even if not so intended, served the purpose to discredit that eminent historian.

Later I will undertake to show that he misquotes Garcilaso, called by him the "Inca"; but at this juncture

my purpose is to show that the professor was entirely ignorant of the topography and geology of the country in question; otherwise I believe he would not have made the statements he did.

Bear in mind that his friend, Dr. Rowland, very correctly points out that an accurate knowledge of the topography and geology of the country is very essential to a right understanding of the matters involved.

In order to have a clear understanding of the question here at issue I will quote that part of the professor's alleged quotation from Garcilaso in the precise words of the professor, as follows:

> "Because of *many streams* around there they could not use their horses."

The professor then adds:

> "It will readily be seen that this description does not apply to Fort Pickering."

The professor evidently places reliance in the statement attributed to Garcilaso that there were "numerous streams" adjacent to the point of discovery. That there were numerous streams all over the bluffs cannot be successfully denied.

As stated, what is called Poplar Ridge is a narrow ridge of land extending from the Tippah highlands some fifty miles westward, stopping abruptly at the Mississippi river, the west end of the ridge constituting what from time immemorial has been called the Chickasaw Bluffs. What was and is the character of the soil or ground of these bluffs? It is what is called a loess for-

mation, consisting of a fine siliceous loam of a pale yellow color, having in it considerable sand almost impalpably fine. Beneath this formation there is to be found different colored sands of varying thickness, laying in different strata, and likewise there are strata of gravel.

It may be added (though not pertinent to the present discussion) that some three hundred feet below the surface a thick, blue clay, impervious to water, is found, which when pierced, is found to lay upon a very fine white water-bearing sand, and from this sand gushes up an inexhaustible supply of pure artesian water with which the city is supplied.

With a given high, narrow ridge of ground composed as above indicated; with an annual rain fall of about fifty inches, how could it be otherwise than that this ridge would, in course of time, be furrowed with numerous streams?

And with a primeval forest, cane, and underbrush springing from the soil and over the ground decayed vegetation holding water almost like a sponge, how could it be otherwise, than that a part of the rainwater would percolate the loess, and flow along lower horizontal strata of sand or gravel, finding an outlet as springs, where these strata were cut by the streams, locally called bayous?

This is precisely what took place.

It would be a great mistake to suppose, as apparently assumed by Professor Lewis, that the lay of the land at the top of the bluffs and backwards towards the east was a flat expanse. Far to the contrary it was much broken by numerous small streams.

Even present appearances show this in part, but we must remember that the most of these small streams, hills and hollows have been obliterated in the building of the city. Thus, my office is in the Cotton Exchange Building, a twenty story skyscraper, fronting Madison, Second and South Court Streets opposite Court Square. No one now would ever suppose that formerly a small stream flowed where it now stands; and yet when some years since the foundations of this building were laid, some bridge timbers, roots of trees and the bed of a small stream were found twenty feet below the surface.

Very little of the storm water ran or runs now westward from the bluff into the river, because on an average not exceeding one thousand feet from the water's edge, the surface slopes eastward, carrying the water into Bayou Gayoso, which is about one-quarter of a mile from the river going east on Madison, the bed of the bayou being about forty feet lower than the bluff at Madison and Front.

The bluffs were criss-crossed by numerous streams, the chief one being Bayou Gayoso, some five and a half miles long, running in a main north by west direction, emptying into Wolf river about 2500 feet from its junction with the Mississippi, and with its east and west forks, the Little Betty and De Soto drains the southern

and central divisions of the present city. The main affluent of Bayou Gayoso is Quimby Bayou, something less than four and a half miles long from its head to where it empties into Bayou Gayoso, and with its tributaries drains the northern part of the city.

Probably there is not one person in ten thousand in Memphis today who are aware of the fact that as late as 1831, Bayou Gayoso spread out into a large lake just north of the old Louisville & Nashville depot adjacent to Second Street; still such was the case, and it was known as Catfish Bay, because of the abundance of fish, and especially cat fish, to be found in its waters.

Flat boats, fishing house boats and other water craft in the early days came from the Mississippi up Wolf and then into Gayoso for good fish and safe anchorage in Catfish Bay; and many fishermen built little shanties on the shores of this bay. A movement was set on foot to clear them away as unsightly and a nuisance, which fired the wrath of these Catfish Bay inhabitants. Old Ike Rawlings was considered a fixture in the Mayor's chair and advocated the removal, but a young lawyer lately from Kentucky, named Seth Wheatley, took up the cudgel for Catfish Bay and its inhabitants and defeated Rawlings for Mayor in 1831. The end of Catfish Bay is thus set forth by Keating (p. 184):

> "Two nights after Wheatley's election as mayor, a perfect sluice of tan-ooze and filth, from Carr's tannery, was sent into the bayou, and thus found its way to the bay; the waters of which were so polluted that the fish were killed and the water could no longer be used for any domestic service.

> Great indignation followed, much of it expressed in the adjectives and expletives usual to the orators of Pinch, but Catfish Bay was ruined, and the people quickly left it and its shores. Some of the boats were floated out, others were broken up and the shanties were taken down and moved to other localities. The merchants and citizens were very liberal, and the change was effected in a very short time and at last with the best of feeling. After a few days all were quieted down, and the names Catfish Bay and Pinch Gut were dropped."

Probably there are not a half dozen people in Memphis who know that the site of Carr's Tannery referred to was on a large bayou in the present Southern Railroad yards between Madison and Adams Avenues, bounded on the west by Lauderdale, and that this large bayou flows now through brick culverts *under the surface* since the building of the first railroad into Memphis in 1857.

Speaking of fish it may be mentioned that in early days numerous cool springs were dotted all along the course of these bayous which cut deep down into the soil so that there was cool running water in the bayous all the year round. The veteran and retired banker, Miles S. Buckingham, in his reminiscent moods, is fond of telling how in early days, when the dogwoods were in blossom, he would take his hook and line any day and bring home a long string of the finest game fish, caught from the cool waters of the bayou south of Vance Avenue.

What a beautiful, nay, was not the Chickasaw Bluff country an ideal, place for a home of the children of the

forest? Might we not expect permanent Indian villages on the bluffs proper and the adjacent country?

As we have seen the old Chickasaw trail coming from the southeast after crossing Nonconnah and along the line of the present Pigeon Roost Road, passed up Brown's Hill, thus abruptly ascending from the low to high land; and in a short distance there commences a beautiful expanse of almost level country, some six or seven miles from the Court House in Memphis.

In my opinion this was the vicinity of Quizquiz, the first village reached by De Soto near the great river.

It must not be supposed, however, that Poplar Ridge afforded the only country adapted to permanent villages for the Indians. Quite to the contrary, the country north of Wolf River and south of Nonconnah furnished ideal conditions for permanent villages for the Indians; and moreover at one time, how remote no one knows, they lived in the vicinity of the present Capleville, Tennessee, some twelve miles from Memphis, where there were in early days abundant springs, but now, alas! the most of them are gone, or else so shrunken as to be scarce shadows of their former proportions.

Nearly due east of the Ila Douglass homestead, say eleven miles from Memphis and one mile from the Pigeon Roost Road, and across Little Nonconnah Creek, there is to this day in a cultivated field, the remnants of a salt lick covering about one-fourth of an acre of ground; a geologic feature of the country as rare as it was valuable to the Indians.

About a mile in a southeasterly direction from the lick there were in my boyhood days two Indian old fields surrounded by dense forests; about one-quarter of a mile apart. It was the custom of the Chickasaws to live apart to a large extent, doubtless being taught by experience that this contributed to their good health and general well being. One of these Indians' fields is on the estate of my late sister, Mrs. Mary Lou Malone Ellis.

About one mile west of the Pigeon Roost Road and some two miles west of the salt lick, there is upon the estate of the late George R. Tuggle, a considerable Indian mound, formerly having large trees standing thereon. These trees have been cut long since, and the adjacent ground put in cultivation. Near this mound and on top of a high ridge there were two pondy places, such as referred to by the Gentleman of Elvas. When I was a boy these pondy places were of considerable extent; in fact, were miniature lakes, having clear water in them the year round, and in winter I have often seen them covered with wild ducks and other wild fowls. One of them has been drained for agricultural purposes, and the other is much shrunken in size. George M. Douglass owns the property on which the salt lick can now be seen. His parents were among the early settlers, he now being on the shady side of seventy, but hale and hearty. He well remembers being shown when a boy a large tree, with low heavy limbs, in which he was told the Indians sought a perch from which they could easily kill deer and other game (with their bows and arrows), which came to the lick for salt.

Milton Blocker was born and has lived all his life at the pretty little village of Olive Branch, Mississippi, some seven miles southeast of the salt lick referred to, he now also being on the shady side of seventy, but very active and alert for his years. His father and mother settled on a large estate while the Indians were still in Mississippi, a part of which he now owns. He readily recalls hearing his mother, who lived to an old age, speak of the salt lick referred to, and its great value to the Indians, in drawing to it the abundant game of the country from far and near.

As showing the uses to which the Indians put these rare salt licks, and the dangers attendant thereon, I will here insert an excerpt from Cushman (pages 486, 487):

> "When watching at a deer lick at night by the light of the full-orbed moon, in which the writer has indulged years ago in the Mississippi forests then untouched by the ax, the hunter found as his rival in the same sport, the panther or the catamount, sometimes both; and whose presence was made known by the moving shadow cast upon the ground by moonlight, as he was preparing to leap from his perch upon a deer that had, unconscious of danger, walked into the lick. An incident of this kind happened to a hunter in Oktibbihaw County, Mississippi, shortly after the exodus of the Choctaws. He had found a deer lick in Catarpo (corruption of the Choctaw word Katapah, stopped; referring to the obstructions in the creek by drifts) swamps, which was much frequented by the deer. He built a scaffold fifteen or twenty feet high on the edge of a lick, and on a beautiful night of the full moon, shortly after sundown, took his seat thereon. About ten o'clock at night a deer

noiselessly entered the lick a few rods distant from his place of concealment, and began licking the salty earth; he was just in the act of shooting it, when his attention was attracted from the deer to a moving shadow upon the ground between him and the deer; he at once looked up to ascertain who his neighbor was, and was not a little surprised to see a huge panther standing on a projecting limb of a tree, that reached nearly over and just behind him, and preparing to spring upon the unsuspecting deer. He thought no more of the deer, and gave his undivided attention to his rival who had unceremoniously and clandestinely taken his seat a little higher and nearly over his head, without so much as saying 'by your leave.' Not being very fastidious just then, he quietly yielded the right of precedence to his fellow hunter above, in all things pertaining to the deer quietly licking the salty earth below. For several minutes he gazed upon the huge beast as it maneuvered upon the limb, seemingly doubtful as to making a successful spring. Finally the panther made a tremendous leap from the limb, passing almost directly over the hunter's head, and lit directly upon the deer's back. The bleating of the helpless deer momentarily broke the stillness of the forest, and then all was hushed. The panther pulled his victim to the outer edge of the lick, stood a moment and then with mighty bounds disappeared in the surrounding forests. During all this the hunter sat quietly upon his perch cogitating over the novel scene. But his reveries were suddenly interrupted by a wild and terrible yell, seemingly half human and half beast, fearful enough to awaken all the denizens of the forest for miles away; then came an immediate response from a distant point in the swamp. That was enough to bring the hunter's cogitations to a fixed determination, which was clearly manifested by the agility displayed in descending the scaffold, and the schedule time on

which he ran towards home, leaving the two panthers to enjoy their unenvied supper of venison in their native woods undisturbed. Often the hunter found the panther had preceded him at the deer licks; in all such cases, having previously resolved never to dispute precedency with any gentleman of that family, he quietly left him to the undisputed possession of the chance of venison for that night, particularly."

As might well be supposed, the Chickasaw Indians well knew and appreciated the great value of salt licks; and in the treaty by which they ceded their possessions in West Tennessee, they especially reserved for their own use and the emoluments expected therefrom, a considerable salt lick near Paris, Tennessee; out of which quite a scandal grew up and was fully aired in heated debates in Congress between the most eminent congressmen of that day.

It was charged that certain politicians of high and low degree, closely connected with President Jackson, had taken advantage of their official positions to exploit and develop these salt mines for their own account; for salt wells were sunk there and considerable salt turned out in the early days, but not sufficiently abundant to justify continued operations.

In Volume 9, page 252 of the American (Tennessee) Historical Magazine, under date of July, 1904, there is a very interesting article by the late Governor James D. Porter, giving a good account of this salt formation, and the heated controversy to which the Chickasaw treaty in reference thereto gave rise.

No one can doubt that at some former prehistoric period Indians had a permanent home near Capleville; but who the Indians were, or when they lived there will probably remain a shrouded mystery, though the probability is they were Chickasaws.

The Location of Quizquiz—

What was the site of Quizquiz, the first Indian village taken by the De Soto expedition, just before the discovery of the Mississippi? This has to me been an interesting question, and I will now state my conclusions in reference thereto.

It will aid the reader to turn back to the fifth chapter in which appears verbatim the accounts given by the three narratives which have received the commendation of Professor Lewis and Dr. Rowland. No two of them agree as to the details, nor does the narrative of Garcilaso agree in its details with the other three.

This is not surprising for obvious reasons.

On the other hand, the main, or determinative, facts can be grasped from a consideration of the three narratives, taken together and construed as one whole.

From these it appears that the approach to the river was quite gradual; and that the expedition first came to a village called Quizquiz, then to another not named, and then to a third, where "they saw the great river;" that is, the Mississippi. Rodrigo Ranjel is much commended for his accuracy of statements, and as he more succinctly and clearly states the details connected with the discovery of the river it is here repeated for convenience:

> "Saturday, the last of April, the army set out from the place of the barricade and marched nine days through a deserted country, and by a rough way, mountainous and swampy, until May 8, when they came to the *first* village of Quizqui, which they took by assault and captured much people and clothes; but the governor promptly restored them to liberty and had everything restored to them for fear of war, although that was not enough to make friends of these Indians. *A league beyond this village* they came upon *another* with abundance of corn, and soon again *after another league,* upon *another,* likewise amply provisioned. There they saw the great river."

How near the last village was to the river is not stated; but presumptively it was not far.

It appears quite certain that Quizquiz was at least two leagues from the river; and while we understand that a league is considered in this country to be three English miles, the real inquiry is what was the length of a Spanish league; for presumably the narrators had reference to the Spanish league.

The Century dictionary gives the Spanish league as 4.214 miles, and the Spanish judicial league as being 2.634 miles long. Which kind of the two Spanish leagues the narrators had in mind we have no means to determine; but I think we may safely assume that the two leagues which lay between Quizquiz and the river covered a space of from six to eight miles; and following the ancient Chickasaw trace, which is now the Pigeon Roost Road, Quizquiz was somewhere not far from Brown's Hill, named for Dr. Robert Frierson Brown, a

pioneer land owner in that vicinity, and an eminent physician.

From Brown's Hill on to the old Bethel place, about or a little over a mile, there is an unusually level expanse of country, with barely enough inclination to drain the waters falling thereon; no doubt its beauty attracted the attention of P. C. Bethel, a man of great wealth, and who built a palatial residence there before the Civil War, and though for over a generation it has been sadly neglected, it still rears its lofty roof towards the sky.

As usual, Biedma is very laconic, saying that "the town (Quizquiz) was near the banks of the River Espiritu Santo;" that is the river of the Holy Ghost, the name given it by De Soto.

It is manifest that the word *near,* as used here, has no definite significance; but under the surrounding circumstances I think it may safely be said that at a distance of from six to eight miles, the town may have been very properly described as being near the great river. The Gentleman of Elvas, after mentioning the capture of Quizquiz, and the negotiations and circumstances attendant thereon, only mentions one and not two towns visited before reaching the Mississippi, but there is no real conflict here between he and Ranjel for the supposition is that he omitted to mention the other town, either by inadvertence or because it was deemed an unnecessary detail. He does say, however, "there was little maize in the place, and the governor moved to another town, half a league from the great river (meaning the Mississippi) where it was found in sufficiency."

This was doubtless the third village mentioned by Ranjel, who did not state its distance from the river. It would seem therefore, that Quizquiz was approximately two and one-half leagues from the Mississippi.

De Soto's Camp Near a River Bank—

There are some other details which dovetail into our insistence that the Mississippi was discovered on these bluffs, to which no reference is made by those who deny the correctness of our conclusions.

All the narratives agree that the Spaniards came upon the Indians suddenly, and Biedma says the men were away from the village working in the maize fields, and we know that at that time of the year the young corn must have been well advanced, though it was before roasting ears were ready for the table. However, in the various villages there was plenty of maize, that is old corn, both for the little army as well as all the horses of De Soto. This shows a fruitful country, sufficient and more than sufficient to supply the permanent Indian villages; in fact the very best farming lands stretched out in many directions far beyond the necessities of the Indians. Why should we not expect permanent Indian villages in this stretch of the country so perfectly adapted to their comfort and well being?

De Soto captured all the women in Quizquiz, numbering, according to Biedma, three hundred, and among these was the mother of the Cacique; and De Soto held these as hostages, sending word to the Chief by one of the captives to come and he would turn his mother and

the captives over to him, but the wily Indian evidently scented treachery, and declined the invitation.

The after developments are not stated with clearness as to time or the exact place; nor is it anywhere stated what place De Soto pitched camp after taking into custody all the people in Quizquiz. The Cacique very properly demanded the unconditional release of the captives, to which De Soto finally agreed, because his men had arrived, weak and weary for the want of maize, and his horses were also lean. How long these negotiations were pending does not appear, but the probability is they covered at least one or two whole days. After stating these negotiations, Elvas adds:

> "The next day, while he was hoping to see the Chief, many Indians came, with bows and arrows, to set upon the Christians, when he commanded that all the armed horsemen should be mounted and in readiness. Finding them prepared, the Indians stopped at the distance of a crossbow-shot from where the Governor was, near a river bank, where, after remaining quietly half an hour, six chiefs arrived at the camp," etc.

It is evident that De Soto had drawn up his cavalry at his camp near a precipitous bank, in order to protect his rear. It is not said that he was near a river, but "near a river bank," from which expression I am inclined to the opinion that De Soto had pitched his camp upon the brow of Brown's hill, or in that vicinity, where the descent from the high to the low ground was sufficiently abrupt as to afford protection to his rear, and unquestionably such conditions then prevailed, though much

changed since then by the effacing finger of the white man, of time and the elements.

If it be said Nonconnah is not a river, then my answer is that it all depends on the opinion of the person writing the narrative as to what constitutes a river. Usually the word river is understood to mean a considerable body of water flowing in a channel with a certain definite course, and with a perceptible current throughout the year. At that time Nonconnah unquestionably came up to this definition of a river. But it is well known that in arid states like Southern California and Southern Texas, and doubtless in the arid portions of Spain, many streams which have no current for months at a time are called rivers.

It is perfectly possible that in the time of De Soto, now near four hundred years ago, Nonconnah may have run at the foot of Brown's hill for the precipitous character of the hill or bluff indicates that anciently the stream washed its base, and such streams flowing through alluvial soil often change their courses.

Today Nonconnah bottom proper is one mile wide, and going south after emerging from the bottom proper there is a low expanse over a mile long that must have abounded in pondy places and thickets, and extremely bad to cross in the days of De Soto. Evidently Nonconnah bottom formed to some extent a natural barrier and protection to the Indians living on the Chickasaw Bluffs at that time, from incursions coming from the south. The narratives all agree that there were no natives then living in the country traveled over by the expedition, be-

tween Alibamo and Quizquiz, because of a war between the Indians. All agree that when the expedition appeared at Quizquiz, the Indians were taken by great surprise, the men being at work in the maize fields.

If De Soto came over the short-cut or direct trail, his sudden ascent from Nonconnah bottoms up and upon high land, subsequently called Brown's Hill, with the seizure of all the inhabitants of the first village he reached, very naturally took the Indians by complete surprise. It could not be otherwise. The conditions of the surrounding country demonstrated how it was the natural result for the Indians to be taken by surprise; thus dovetailing into the details of the story as given by the three narratives.

If I was inclined to be dogmatic, I might here enter my *ipse dixit,* but I leave that course for others more learned, leaving the reader to draw his own conclusions.

While I have stated my opinion as to the locality of De Soto's first camp after seizing all the inhabitants of Quizquiz, I am by no means dogmatically wedded to that opinion. However, there are certain main facts which loom up so plainly that they can not be mistaken.

(1) De Soto suddenly appeared and by surprise seized all the inhabitants of Quizquiz, including the mother of the Cacique or Chief, and this carried consternation to the Indians and called for a rescue.

(2) De Soto apprehending an attack pitched his camp *near a river-bank,* and drew up in battle array all his cavalry, knowing that their appearance usually struck terror to the

savages, who knew nothing of horses, and both men and horses being encased in armor, gave them the appearance of supernatural monsters, something on the order of the fabled centaurs of the ancient Greeks. This array had the desired effect, for instead of fighting, the Indians, through the six chiefs sent to De Soto's camp, effected a release of all their people and agreed to supply the Spaniards with provisions. Thus hostilities were averted.

(3) After all this had transpired, the Gentleman of Elvas says: "There was little maize in the place, *and the Governor moved to another town, half a league from the great river,* where it was found in sufficiency. He went to look at the river, and saw that near it there was much timber of which piraguas might be made, and a good situation in which the camp might be placed. He directly *moved,* built houses, and settled on a plain a crossbow-shot from the water, bringing together there all the maize of the towns behind, that at once they might go to work and cut down trees for sawing out planks to build barges."

(4) It thus clearly appears that after the first camp on the river bank, De Soto moved to another town half a league from his previous camp; and from this second camp he went and for the first time looked upon the Mississippi, after which he pitched his third or last camp within bow-shot of the water, and began building boats to cross the river.

That De Soto pitched his first camp for defensive purposes "near a river-bank," is undoubtedly true. It is equally true that if he did not pitch that camp at or

near the bluffs in the vicinity of Brown's hill, then the river banks of Wolf River were both sufficiently high and precipitous to furnish protection to the camp and could readily be reached by reconnoitering cavalry in less than an hour from Brown's Hill.

It thus appears that there is not a single detail in the three narratives, that is not accounted for and in complete accord with the physical appearances or topographical features of the country at the fourth Chickasaw Bluff.

Garcilaso de la Vega, the Inca—

It will be noted that I have referred only to the three narratives upon which Professor Lewis and Dr. Rowland have placed the seal of their approval, and I might safely leave the matter here.

The learned historians knowing full well that if the work of Garcilaso de la Vega is considered, they would not have the pretense of a defense for their Tunica theory, affect to discredit his narrative and not satisfied with this, misquote what he said in an important particular. Both from inclination and in justice to the truth of history I propose to look a little more deeply into the matter.

If it be said that this is wandering somewhat from a sketch of the Chickasaws, I answer that the name and fame of the Chickasaws is wrapped up with that of De Soto, and the discovery of the Great river; and moreover that I am writing this as much for my own diversion as for any other purpose; supposing that it will be

of more interest to my immediate family and personal friends than to the public at large.

In the preface to his book *Conquest of Florida,* brought out in 1851, Theodore Irving (the nephew of Washington Irving) said:

> "Garcilaso de la Vega was a man of rank and honor. He was descended from an ancient Spanish stock by the father's side, while by the mother's, he was of the lofty Peruvian line of the Incas. His narrative was originally taken down by himself, from the lips of a friend; a cavalier of worth and respectability, who had been an officer under De Soto, and for whose probity we have the word of the Inca as a guarantee. It was authenticated and enriched by the written journals or memorandums of two soldiers, who had served in the expedition. He had the testimony, therefore, of three eye-witnesses. The Portuguese narrative, on the other hand, is the evidence of merely a single eye-witness, who gives himself out as a cavalier, or gentleman; but for this we have merely his own word, and he is anonymous. There is nothing intrinsic in his work that should entitle it to the exclusive belief that has been claimed for it. It agrees with the narrative of the Inca, as to the leading facts which form the framework of the story; it differs from it occasionally, as to the plans and views of Hernando de Soto; but here the Inca is most to be depended upon—the Spanish cavalier from whom he derived his principal information being more likely to be admitted to the intimate councils of his commander than one of a different nation, and being free from the tinge of national jealousy which may have influenced the statements of the Portuguese.
>
> The narrative of the Portuguese is more meagre and concise than that of Garcilaso; omitting a thousand interesting anecdotes and personal adventures;

but this does not increase its credibility. A multitude of facts, gathered and gleaned from three different persons, may easily have escaped the knowledge, or failed to excite the attention of a solitary individual. These anecdotes are not the less credible because they were striking and extraordinary; the whole expedition was daring and extravagant, and those concerned in it men who delighted in adventure and exploit."

It may be added that the authors of the three narratives referred to are wholly unknown, except through their respective narratives; while Garcilaso was one of the most distinguished authors of his age, dying in 1616, the same year Shakespeare died in England, and his countryman, Cervantes, the author of Don Quixote, died in Spain; Garcilaso being a worthy contemporary of those two immortals in the literature of the world.

His history of Peru is declared by a competent authority to be "A source from which all subsequent writers on the subject have largely drawn, and still continues to be one of the chief authorities on ancient Peru."

While he is chiefly remembered through this history, he was the author of other books which passed through various editions, some being translated into French and English; and as late as 1800, or nearly 200 years after his death, an edition of his works, in seventeen volumes, was brought out in Madrid.

He was admired by his countrymen as a man of piety, virtue, modesty and of devotion to letters, and held in the highest esteem as a historian. He was buried in the Cathedral of Cordova in one of the Chapels called

Garcilaso in his honor; where monumental inscriptions on each side of the altar record his valor (for he was at one time a gallant soldier), his virtues and his literary merits.

And this is the author whose narrative is rejected, admittedly superior to all the others in literary style, and the most famous; its rejection being upon the charge that it is spurious; that this good and distinguished man, without any motive therefor, palmed off a gigantic literary fraud upon the world!

Garcilaso realized that absolute accuracy in all its details was impossible under the circumstances, and Irving quotes him as saying:

> "I cannot hold myself responsible for the accuracy of the distances I give, for, although I have spared no exertions, and have used all the diligence to arrive at the truth, yet I have been unavoidably compelled to leave much to conjecture. The Spaniards had no instruments with them by which they could compute distances; their main object was to conquer the country, and seek for silver and gold; consequently, they gave themselves little trouble to note the route."

Nor is it a strange thing that Garcilaso should "have set down," as it was then phrased, the story of the three members of the De Soto expedition, when we recall the almost universal illiteracy of the times, as well as the custom for a man of some literary attainments, to write the adventures of those who were unable to perform that service for themselves. There was then as there are now

in illiterate countries, many professional letter-writers, all of which is very natural when we recall the conditions which led to such customs, long since without any existence in highly developed countries.

It was also a strange custom also of those times for authors to withhold their identity; as witness the fact that no one to this day knows who was the author of the narrative of "The Gentleman of Elvas"; on account of which some say it should be rejected; but when we consider the customs of those days, as well as the internal evidence in the narrative, its rejection would be an act of folly.

I will now reproduce the narrative of Garcilaso as appears in Young's History of Memphis, beginning on page 22, where we read that the account there appearing is from the French, contained in Richlet's version of Garcilaso, brought out in 1731. Robert B. Goodwin, a very accurate and scholarly member of the Memphis bar, made the translation for Judge Young, and kindly looked over and confirmed his translation at my request; and I have every reason to believe it is entirely correct, and it is here given.

The Account of Garcilaso de la Vega—

> "The Spaniards in leaving Alibamo, marched across a waste country *bearing always towards the north* in order to get further and further away from the sea, and at the end of three days they came in view of the capital of Chisca, which bears the name of its province and of its ruler. This town is situated near a river which the Indians called Chucagua,

the largest of all those encountered by our people in Florida. The inhabitants of Chisca, unaware of the coming of the troops, by reason of the war which they were waging with their neighbors, were taken by surprise. The Spaniards plundered them and took several of them prisoners. The rest of them fled, some into a forest between the village and the river, and others to the house of the Cacique, *which stood upon a high mound commanding a view of the whole place.* The Cacique was old, and then sick upon his bed, in a condition of great weakness. He was of such small stature and of such meagre visage that in that country the like had never been seen. Nevertheless at the sound of the alarm and being surprised that his subjects were being plundered and being taken prisoners, he, arose, walked out of his chamber with a battle axe in his hand and made the threat that he would slay all who might enter his lands without his leave. But as he was about to go forth from his house to confront the Spaniards, the women of his household, aided by some of his subjects who had made their escape from the Spaniards, restrained him. With tears in their eyes they reminded him of the fact that he was feeble, without men at arms, his vassals in disorder, and not in condition for fighting and that those with whom he had to do were vigorous, well disciplined, great in number and, for the most part, mounted upon beasts of such speed that none could ever escape them.

That it was necessary then, to wait a favorable occasion for their revenge and to deceive their enemies in the meantime by fair appearances of friendship, thus preventing the destruction of himself and his subjects.

"These considerations caused Chisca to pause, but he was so chagrined by the injury which the Spaniards had done him, that instead of being willing to listen to the envoys of the general in their

demands for peace, he declared war upon them, adding that he hoped within a short while to cut the throat of their captain and all those with him.

"De Soto, however, was not astonished at this, but sent others and they made excuses for the disorder created upon their arrival, and repeated the demand for peace.

"For it was clear to De Soto that his men were discouraged on account of the constant skirmishing, and were encumbered with sick men and sick horses; that in less than six hours there had come to the side of the Cacique not less than four thousand men, quite well equipped; that in all probability he would get together a very much larger number; *besides, that the lay of the land was very favorable to the Indians, and very unfavorable to the Spaniards, on account of the thicket surrounding the town, which would make it impossible to use his cavalry;* that finally, instead of making progress by fighting, the Spaniards were working their own destruction from day to day. These were the considerations which induced the general to offer peace.

"But the larger part of the Indians who were assembled to deliberate upon the subject had quite contrary views. Some were for war, believing that to be the only means of recovering their goods and delivering their companions from the power of the Spaniards. They declared that there need be no fear of such people; that such earnest demands for peace as the Spaniards made afforded certain proof of their cowardice; finally, that it was fitting to apprise them of the courage of those whom they had just attacked by giving battle in turn, to the end that no stranger in future would have the temerity to enter their domain. But the other side contended that peace was their only means of getting back their property and their imprisoned countrymen; that if there should be a battle their misery would only be increased by reason of fire and the loss

of their crops (which were still unharvested), resulting in ruin to the entire province and the death of many of their people.

"For they said inasmuch as their enemies had come as far as their country, through so many trials and perils and through so many fierce tribes, their courage could not be fairly doubted.

"Thus they said without any other proofs, peace ought to be made, and that if they were afterwards dissatisfied they could break the truce to a much better advantage than they could on that day make war. This opinion prevailed and the Cacique, dissembling his resentment, asked the envoys what they thought to gain by peace, which they seemed to desire so much. They answered, their lodging in the town, together with supplies for passing on. Chisca agreed to all on condition that they should set at liberty those of his subjects whom the Spaniard held prisoners, return all the goods that they had seized, and not enter into his house; and he warned them that the only alternative would be war of extermination.

"The Spaniards accepted peace on these conditions and released the subjects of Chisca, for they had no lack of Indian servants, and returned all the booty—consisting only of some sorry deerskins and clothing of small value. Thereupon the inhabitants abandoned the town with the supplies which they had and the Spaniards remained six days, treating their sick. On the last day De Soto got leave from Chisca to visit him in his house, and after he had thanked him for the favor done his troops he withdrew, proceeding the next day upon his journey of discovery."

The italics are mine, and designed primarily to call attention to two matters which attest manifest errors on the part of the learned historians in question.

(1) It will be recalled that Professor Lewis stated that after the expedition left the Chickasaw Country, it turned west, not only without any support in any narrative therefor, but in direct contradiction to Biedma, who says it went to the northwest. And now we see that Garcilaso states the course as "bearing always *towards* the north (not due north), in order to get further and further away from the sea."

(2) It will be recalled also that the professor quotes Garcilaso as saying that De Soto could not use his cavalry *"because of the many streams* around there they could not use their horses"; whereas we now see that what he really said was:

> "Besides, that the lay of the land was very favorable to the Indians, and very unfavorable to the Spaniards, *on account of the thicket surrounding the town,* which would make it impossible to use his cavalry."

As no one visited the Mississippi River after the De Soto expedition, for a period of 142 years, how else was it possible for Garcilaso to obtain the information that a mound was located on the Mississippi where its discovery was made, except through members of that expedition? To assume that his narrative was a fiction, necessarily concedes also, that the author had more than a prophetic vision, or a prescience unknown to the children of men.

It is not strange, therefore, that the ablest historians and the public at large have long since accepted the fourth Chickasaw Bluff as the point of the discovery of the great Mississippi River.

De Soto at the Mississippi—

"High on a bluff they stood; anear its base
The Mississippi rolled its mighty flood.
The lordly river, half a league in breadth,
And flowing gently, parted in two streams
Around a verdant island to the south.
Titanic in his grandeur, yet serene
And placid with a godlike majesty,
The King of Rivers to the Christians' hearts
Brought admiration, awe and reverence.

De Soto viewed with fascinated eyes
The scene before him. Into his troubled soul
There came, he knew not why, a holy calm;
A deep yet tranquil joy surged through his heart,
As with a great thanksgiving hymn to God.
Faint in his ears, a whisper from afar
Assured him that this river with his name
Would be entwined forever; that this stream,
More stately than the Danube or the Nile,
Would be the artery, in a distant age,
To some illustrious empire, more august
Than that which centered on the Tiber's shore.
Here would be giant cities, splendid halls,
The homes of Commerce, Learning, Wealth and Power.
Here Art and Science would be honored; here
Would be the haunts of Story and of Song,—
Renowned in lays of poets yet to be,—
Surpassing in romantic legendry
The dome-crowned Arno or the vine-clad Rhine.
He called it The River of the Holy Ghost.
Long after all his men had sought the camp,
Intent on little tasks that closed their day,
De Soto, silent, mused upon the banks

Of the Great River, that, with sacrifice
Of toils and tears, his prowess now had won.
Recumbent in a dim, secluded spot,
As in a sanctuary, he was lulled
Into benign repose. Far to the west,
The setting sun in benediction hung,
And burnished heaving waves with melted gold;
Above the vast, deep western wilderness
He paused, then sank, and left the quiet world
To rest, to meditation and to sleep.
The brilliant gold of sunset deepened slow
To orange; then the fragile floating clouds
Took chastened tints of faded rose and pearl.
The chirp of crickets beat with drowsy notes;
The cadence of cicadas, like a dirge,
Sighed through the unillumined forest gloom;
The requiems of lone thrushes pined and yearned
At rustic altars of umbrageous woods,—
Soft evensongs at gentle evenfall
For euthanasia of departing day.
Through haunts sequestered and forsaken stole
The sundown shadows; from its rich maroon
To ashen twilight waned the afterglow.
Soon melancholy purple dimmed the skies,
And through the vesper gloaming, tremulous,
The fair-faced, timid stars came one by one.
The gray-winged gulls wheeled slowly, homeward-bound.
Then solemn Nightfall, like a Sibyl, came,
And in one great libation, from her urn
Outgushed the darkness over earth and heaven;
But still De Soto mused beside the stream,
Immovable—in silence,—lost in thought."

WALTER MALONE,
In Hernando De Soto.

De Soto Crosses the Mississippi—

It will be recalled that in the fifth chapter I referred to the fact that after Professor Lewis had, in his imagination, landed De Soto in the swamps of Arkansas, opposite some imaginary point in Tunica County, Mississippi, he suggested that some prehistoric earthquake may have changed the face of the earth in that vicinity.

This suggestion was the offspring of necessity, for it evidences the fact that the Professor must have realized all too well, that there was not a single physical feature of that country which would dovetail with any one of the three narratives to which he gives his allegiance. Hence an appeal to some supposed or imaginary cataclysm in nature to supply the want of solid facts; an appeal which makes it difficult to suppress a smile of incredulity.

But, however this may be, one who merely searches for the real place at which the Mississippi was discovered by De Soto, has no need to appeal to the miraculous, when he reads the three narratives of those who are acclaimed as credible witnesses, to see and understand that the discovery was made where Memphis is now enthroned. What are the undisputed facts?

We have seen that the eastern shores of the river where the discovery was made, sustained a teeming population of aborigines, and that the physical features of the Chickasaw Bluffs, with its splendid hinterland, afforded almost an early paradise or happy hunting grounds for the Red children of the forest. And, so likewise, the opposite or western shores of the Mississippi supported

an equally large aboriginal population, and we have only to consider the physical features of the western hinterland to observe how well it fits in with the three narratives referred to.

Biedma says (p. 26):

> "On the other shore we saw numbers of people collected to oppose our landing, who had many canoes. We set about building four large piraguas, each capable of taking sixty or seventy men and five or six horses. We were engaged in this work twenty-seven or twenty-eight days. During this time, the Indians every day, at three o'clock in the afternoon would get into two hundred and fifty very large canoes they had, well shielded, and came near the shores on which we were; with loud cries they would exhaust their arrows upon us, and then return to the other bank."

Ranjel (page 137) estimated the number of Indians on the opposite shore to oppose the passage, at seven thousand, and that all of them had shields made of canes joined, so strong and closely interwoven with such thread that a cross-bow could hardly pierce them.

The Gentleman of Elvas says (page 113) that the barge in which the Cacique came had an awning at the poop under which he sat; and there from under the canopy where the chief man was, the course was directed and orders issued to the rest. They were painted with ochre, wearing great bunches of white and other plumes of many colors, having feathered shields in their hands. with which they sheltered the oarsmen on either side, the warriors standing erect from bow to stern, holding bows and arrows.

He added they were fine looking men, very large and well formed; and what with the awnings, the plumes and the shields, the pennons and the number of the people in the fleet, it appeared like a famous Armada of galleys.

The Country Opposite Memphis Dovetails With the Narratives—

With such a large population and splendid types of Indians inhabiting the western shores of the river where De Soto crossed, what should we expect but a fine country fit to produce and maintain such a people? Such was the country then and now, opposite the fourth Chickasaw Bluffs.

It is a well known topographical feature of this section of the delta that there was an almost continuous ridge of high land, commencing from about where Mound City now is, and running in a westward direction to Crowley's Ridge, the high ground about forty miles from Memphis; that is, the delta is about forty miles wide, opposite Memphis, and this high ground an almost continuous way across the Mississippi delta, with some occasional breaks therein.

Of course, there were breaks in the ridge, and there were occasional lakes, bayous and some rivers to cross, but there was sufficiently continuous high ground or ridges as to make it of great importance to all who wished to cross the delta, and this was such a marked feature of the country that the United States made it

available before the day of railroads, for the construction of a military road over which to transport troops.

Taking advantage of this feature of the country, the United States Government long before the Civil War, constructed a military road from the vicinity of Mound City, Arkansas, across the bottoms to Little Rock, Arkansas. As the name implies, there were Indian mounds at the site of that ancient village, and the mounds gave the place its name, and they are there today, silent witnesses to the fact that De Soto crossed the Mississippi where Memphis now is.

When the Chickasaw Indians were moved across the river in the thirties, thousands of them were ferried from Memphis to Mound City, under the supervision of Marcus B. Winchester, who had been the first mayor of Memphis.

There they commenced to cross the delta on their long journey to their new home, then in the far West. There was a considerable section around Mound City that was not subject to overflow, and in the early days there was a settlement and village there, for it was then a rival of Memphis for the supremacy of the valley. The Spaniards fully appreciated and well understood the value of such high land, and located grants around Mound City when they were the overlords of the country. It is also interesting to recall that only twelve to fifteen miles north from Mound City the traveler anciently and now may view the beautiful and well known Wappanocca Lake, famous for its unrivaled fisheries, and myriads of duck and waterfowls of all kinds.

It has an outlet leading to the river, called Wappanocca Bayou, while another outlet leads to the Tyronza River. These bayous of the delta bear a great resemblance to canals, and these bayous are doubtless what the De Soto narratives called canals leading to the river from certain lakes. Indeed, some writers have insisted that these bayous were in fact canals constructed by some prehistoric people for the drainage of the country; and I have heard men learnedly argue to this effect, and viewing these bayous as they appeared years ago, I could not but feel the force of their arguments, though I was not convinced of the correctness of the theory.

A recent map of Crittenden County, Arkansas, before me, prepared by the Rhodes Abstract Company. shows the country adjacent to Wappanocca Bayou and Lake plastered over with old Spanish grants; and it may be added that the ground there is higher and the Indian mounds more numerous than at Mound City.

It may be also added, that as you go north from Crittenden County there is higher ground, and that Mississippi County, lying immediately north of and adjoining Crittenden, is regarded by many as the best county in the delta, owing not only to the fertility of its soil, but to its rolling and well-drained surface. Such is the goodness of this part of the delta that Professor Lewis, in his article, finally leads, or lands, De Soto in Mississippi County, though it is a thing to me incredible that he could have floundered his way so far north from a point somewhere opposite Tunica County, Mississippi.

Anciently, and as we all know until within recent years, in its approach towards the Chickasaw Bluffs, after the Mississippi passed Mound City, its direction was eastwardly, and that opposite the northern section of the Bluffs it turned abruptly southward around Hopefield Point. From the window of my office on the eleventh floor of the Cotton Exchange Building, facing Court Square, I can almost see the location of old Mound City. For many years the river has been gradually shifting its bed eastward at and beyond Mound City, and within the last two or three years it has cut a new channel, running almost south, by the old Hen and Chicken Islands, just north of Memphis, and leaving Mound City far from the main channel of the river.

With these unquestioned topographical features of the western country across the Mississippi from the Chickasaw Bluffs before us, can any reasonable man doubt that De Soto was ignorant thereof, or failed to acquaint himself with the lay of the land, when ignorance in respect thereto might lead to the destruction of every man in the expedition?

What do the narratives disclose as to the route that was taken and the character of the country beyond the Mississippi?

The river was high, bringing down many trees with its currents, the Gentleman of Elvas (page 115) stating that the river was *near a half league wide;* adding that a man standing on the shore could not be told whether

he was a man or something else, from the other side. The stream was swift and very deep, always flowing turbidly, bringing down from above much timber driven by the force of the current.

Biedma says (page 26) that the river was *near a league wide,* and nineteen or twenty fathoms deep.

On account of the swiftness of the current, Elvas says that they went up along the river about a quarter of a league, and landed about opposite the camps, and from this statement I suppose the landing place was about Hopefield Point. Having located De Soto on the west side of the river, how far did he have to travel to reach the Indian mounds, now the location of Mound City?

The Gentleman of Elvas (page 116) says:

> "The Rio Grande being crossed, the governor marched *a league and a half,* to a large town of Aquixo, which was abandoned before his arrival. Over a plain thirty Indians were seen to draw nigh, sent by the Cacique, to discover what the Christians intended to do, but who fled directly as they saw them. The cavalry pursued, killed ten and captured fifteen. As the town toward which the governor marched was near the river, he sent a captain, with the force he thought sufficient, to take the piraguas up the stream. These, as they frequently wound about through the country, having to go round the bays that swell out the river, the Indians had opportunity to attack those in the piraguas, placing them in great peril, being shot at with bows from the ravines, while they dared not leave the shore, because of the swiftness of the current; so that, as soon as the governor got to the town, he directly sent cross-bow men to them down

> the stream, for their protection. When the piraguas arrived, he ordered them to be taken to pieces, and the spikes kept for making others, when they should be needed."

Anyone familiar with the country will unhesitatingly state that the Indian mounds, adjacent to Mound City, are about four to five miles from Hopefield Point, and any properly scaled map will show the same distance, and thus we have a verification of the estimate made by Elvas that it was a league and a half from the landing place to the first Indian village reached in the Province of Aquixo.

Biedma says (pages 27, 28) with respect to customs of the Indians across the river:

> "Arriving there *as it is the custom of the Caciques to have near their houses a high hill, made by hand, some having houses placed thereon,* we set up the cross on the summit, and we all went on bended knees, with great humility, to kiss the foot of the cross. The Indians did the same as they saw us do, nor more nor less; then directly they brought a great quantity of cane, making a fence about it, and we returned that night to our camp."

From the context, I think this took place in Casqui.

Who can doubt that the first village reached by De Soto across the river in the province of Aquixo, stood where the Indian mounds at the ancient village of Mound City, now rear their worn proportions above the surrounding plain, mute witnesses to the verity of the De Soto narratives, and which have stood there from that time "whereof the memory of man runneth not to the contrary?"

From the province of Aquixo, De Soto next visited the provinces of Casqui and Pacaha, and speaking of these Ranjel (page 140) says:

> "In Aquixo and Casqui and Pacaha, they saw the best villages seen up to that time, better stockaded and fortified, and the people were of finer quality, excepting those of Cofitachequi. The commander and the soldiers remaining some days in Pacaha, they made some incursions further up country."

From these statements we learn two things, that the country possessed the capabilities of producing the numerous and fine specimens of aborigines, who were menacing the expedition while camped on the Chickasaw Bluffs; and that De Soto here, as was the case long before he reached the Mississippi, made "incursions" or side trips, and did not follow continuously in any one given direction.

It is a difficult matter to follow in the footsteps of the De Soto expedition, unless that path crosses some great and imperishable landmark like the Mississippi River, or describes or refers to such commanding topographical and indestructible features of the country through which it passed, as to fix the route pursued with reasonable certainty.

That De Soto discovered the Mississippi River on the fourth Chickasaw Bluffs, the present site of the City of Memphis, I submit, appears beyond a reasonable doubt.

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